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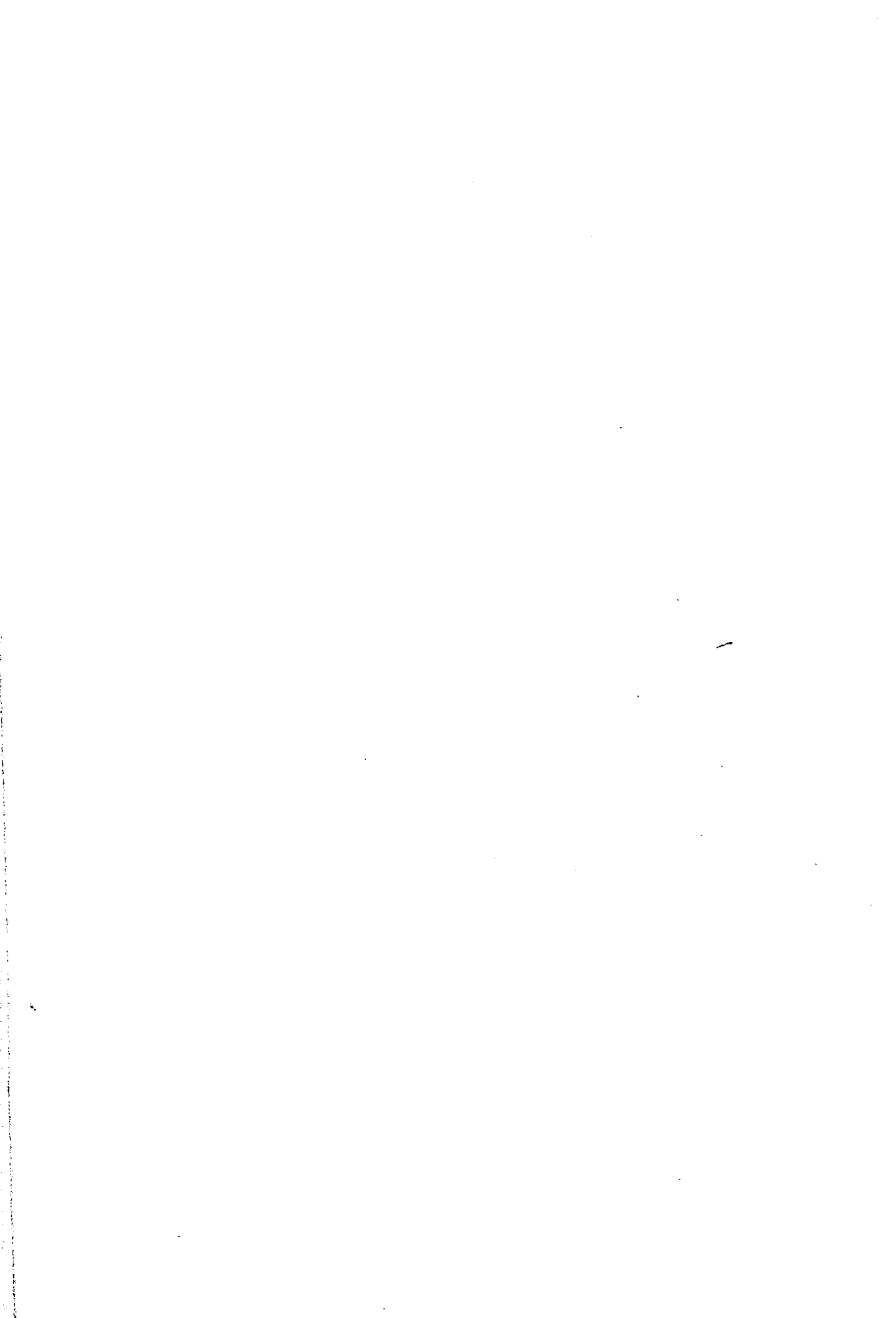
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ON THE THIRD DAY



ON THE THIRD DAY

EVIDENCES FOR THE BODILY RESURRECTION
OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

BY THE

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WITH FOREWORD BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON

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TO
MY MOTHER

PREFACE

THE contents of this little book really constitute a course of Addresses, to some extent rewritten, and generally revised for publication. For when I first delivered them, some four years or so ago, it never entered my mind that this would be their ultimate destiny. I found, however, that they appeared to bring the story of the Resurrection vividly before people's minds, and to convince them that the tradition of nineteen centuries on which that story is based is no mere "idle talk,"¹ but a tradition as unshakable as that, let us say, which informs us that Julius Cæsar invaded Britain. Wherever I have given them—and I have done so in a number of different parishes—I have always been very kindly urged to publish them; for, as it was put to me more than once, "The average person certainly has

¹ St. Luke xxiv. 11.

no idea how convincing the evidence is, when one comes to review it in detail."

It is because I am desirous that this evidence, which I have tried to put together clearly and simply, should reach as wide a circle of people as possible in these days of uncertainty and doubt and actual unbelief, that I have ventured to take these many kind and appreciative listeners at their word.

G. F. P.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
FOREWORD BY THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON	xi
I. INTRODUCTORY	I
II. THE EMPTY TOMB—AN HISTORICAL FACT .	20
III. THE EMPTY TOMB (<i>concluded</i>)	37
IV. FOUR CORROBORATIVE PIECES OF TESTIMONY	54
V. THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL	71
VI. THE EVIDENCE OF EXPERIENCE AND THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY . .	86
APPENDIX A—THE RESURRECTION BODY OF OUR LORD	103
APPENDIX B—THE RESURRECTION BODY— OUR OWN HEREAFTER	113

FOREWORD

THESE are very clear and well-written sermons, and I believe their teaching to be sound and unanswerable.

I am more and more convinced that if we allow the supernatural events in the Gospels to be explained away, and the wonderful story of the Gospels, with all its miraculous accompaniments, to be reduced to what becomes not very interesting prose, we are courting a terrible disaster in the next generation.

When we have taken from our LORD the crown of His supernatural Birth and Resurrection and His powers over sickness and death, then the next generation will take away His crown of moral superiority over others. They will ask, "If He is only a good man, is He really good if He makes claims which no good man would make?"

These sermons only deal with the one point,

namely, His Resurrection from the dead ; but it is a critical point, and I hope that they may help many to a firmer faith in the great foundation truth of Christianity, the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead.

A. F. LONDON.

FULHAM PALACE, S.W.

ON THE THIRD DAY

I

INTRODUCTORY

"If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain."—I COR. XV. 14.

MANY years ago I knew a man who was so far a professed unbeliever that he not only forbade his wife to teach his little son any prayers, but even gave strict orders to his household that the very name of GOD should never be mentioned in the child's hearing. He was determined that, if it were in any way possible, the boy should grow up entirely devoid of the knowledge and love of GOD and of His Son, CHRIST JESUS our LORD. And yet at Easter, and at Christmas, that man would not only accompany his wife to church, but he actually dared—he a self-acknowledged atheist—to profane our LORD's most sacred institution by

presuming to receive the most Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

Such a case, no doubt, was exceptional : indeed, I can only hope it was unique. Nevertheless, the fact remains that at the Great Festivals many people do come to Church who never think of coming on any other day of the year. It may be because it is "the proper thing to do," because the neighbours might be scandalized if they stayed away ; it may be out of pure sentiment (for, however much the modern generation may affect to sneer at it, we are a very sentimental nation at heart) ; it may be for reasons altogether better and higher and more worthy than any of these. I have no desire to probe them. The fact remains : they come. And it is to those who are in the habit of coming to Church on Easter Day simply and solely because it happens to be one of the Great Festivals of the year, and not because they believe in, and wish to thank GOD for, that most stupendous of all miracles which that Great Festival commemorates, that I would more particularly address myself.

Now let me say this at the outset : I am not writing to judge them, to find fault with them ; no, not even to reproach them. Nothing is further from either my intention or my desire. I know only too well that where men or women have lost their belief, there is, at least in many cases, a substantial reason to account for it. It may be that as children they were taught the Faith in so dull, uninteresting, unconvincing a manner that they may almost be said to have lost what they never really possessed at all. It may be that they were brought up in that invertebrate form of churchmanship that we know as Undenominationalism, whose lack of definite teaching is the undoubted cause of the lapsing of many and many a soul every year from the faith of Holy Church. It may be that from their earliest years they were subjected to all the cruel terrors of Calvinism. If so, small wonder if, on reaching years of discretion, their whole being rose in revolt against that hideous and immoral travesty of the true Faith. Again, it may be that they are honestly unable to reconcile the idea of an

all-loving, all-merciful Creator with the sin and the suffering and the cruelty that they see around them in their everyday lives ; and that for one reason or another they have lacked either the opportunity or the inclination to seek counsel of those who might perhaps have helped them in what is admittedly an extremely difficult question. And, again, it may be—I fear it only too often is—that they are likewise unable to reconcile the sublime creed of some who profess and call themselves Christians with the heartless selfishness, the callous uncharitableness, yes, it may be the shameless immorality of their private lives. It is a terrible thought for us who claim to be disciples of JESUS CHRIST that that cruel sneer, that heartless want of sympathy, that unkind, and probably untrue, piece of gossip or scandal, that angry oath, that unclean jest or story, may have led a fellow-Christian, “ the brother for whom CHRIST died,” to lose his hold upon the Faith. Better were it for such a man . . . But you all remember the terrible severity of our LORD’S strictures on those who cause a

weak disciple to stumble. And this is not really the note that I would fain strike in writing of the great message of Easter Day. For, of all days in the year, Easter is pre-eminently that of joy and hope. To children, I suppose—and for obvious reasons—Christmas will always, to the end of time, be accounted dearest of the Church's festivals. But to us who are children no longer Easter must in the very nature of things rank supreme. On Christmas Day, it is true, our LORD was born into the world to redeem men from their sins. But then the work of Redemption still remained to be done ; the Sacred Passion, the Bitter Agony, the Death upon the Cross, had still to be faced. But on Easter Day these are past and over : He has paid the price of sin ; He has come back in triumph from the grave ; He has cheated Death of its victory, and robbed it of its sting ; He has opened to every believer the gates of everlasting life.

Are there some among my readers to whom all this is meaningless ? To whom Easter is a mere name ? Who are unable to realize the

magic of its joy ? If so, I have only one thing to say : Give Christianity a fair trial ; read on ; listen to the most wonderful story in the world's history : and it may be that, ere you have finished, you too shall know the meaning of Easter's happiness.

But do not think, when I say that, that I am relying on my own poor powers of argument. GOD forbid that I should be guilty of such presumption as that. But this I know, and say with unhesitating assurance : that if only you will do your part ; if only you will listen to the Easter message in the right spirit, not in that of obstinate unbelief, or of carping criticism, but with open minds, ready and willing to be convinced if it may be, earnestly desirous of finding the Risen CHRIST if you can, then GOD the HOLY SPIRIT will do the rest : He will lead you, as our Blessed LORD promised He should, into all truth. For this wonderful joy of Easter is not by GOD's will meant to be confined to a small and select organization known as the Church—or rather, I should say that the Church was meant to be

co-extensive with the world : some day, please GOD, it will be so, for it is His will that all mankind should be included in its fold, and should participate in the joy of Easter. And we who have that joy would fain share it with those who have it not ; we can no more keep it to ourselves than could the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost.

And therefore I propose that we should study together the evidence for what I termed just now " the most stupendous of all miracles." I used the term deliberately, and I repeat it. All other miracles of our Blessed LORD stand or fall by this one.¹ Once we accept the great central fact of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, it is mere quibbling, and certainly a futile waste of time, to argue about the " possibility " of this one or that of His other " mighty works." The Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Stilling of the Tempest, the Walking on the Water, yes, the Raising of Lazarus, four days dead, even these fade into comparative insignificance beside this one

¹ Cf. *Ecce Homo*, p. 10.

unique, incomparable miracle, whereby JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth Himself burst the bonds of death and came back from the realms of Paradise.

And this miracle, remember, is, at least from one point of view, the very basis and foundation of the Christian religion. We do not argue that, because JESUS CHRIST rose from the dead, therefore He must have been the Son of GOD, but just the other way about. I know that He was the Incarnate Son of GOD long before I come to the story of the Resurrection ; and, because of that fact, I argue that the Resurrection was inevitable. “ Whom GOD raised up, having loosed the pangs of death : *because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.*”¹ Convince me that the Resurrection is a mere legend, and I will readily acknowledge that the whole structure of Christianity falls to the ground ; that JESUS CHRIST was mere mortal man and nothing more. “ If CHRIST hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain ; your faith also is vain.”

¹ Acts ii. 24.

And so I maintain, as I said just now, that the Resurrection is the very basis and foundation of our religion. And therefore it behoves us to be very sure of our facts. And although faith is the real key-note of Christianity, rather than argument, yet we do well to convince ourselves that there is very definite historical evidence for the truth of the Resurrection. Moreover, it is well, in these days of scepticism and unbelief, to be able to give concise reasons for what we believe. Therefore it is that I have tried to put together the more important of the evidences for the rising again from death of JESUS CHRIST. In the following chapter I shall hope to prove that, however men may try to explain it away, there is no getting away from the fact that within thirty-six hours of our LORD's burial the Tomb was empty, His Body had disappeared. But before dealing with that let me utter three notes of warning, and I will ask your indulgence if I put them at some length.

First, then, I ask that you will approach the subject dispassionately and with open minds,

It is useless to listen to evidence, impossible fairly to weigh the pros and cons, if you have already made up your minds in advance that the story of the Resurrection cannot be true. Put on one side any such preconceived ideas. Never mind what counter-arguments you may have heard from Agnostic lecturers, or read in Agnostic books ; rid your minds of all bias and prejudice, and give the evidence a strictly fair and impartial hearing.

Secondly, do let us beware of specious appeals to "reason" and "logic." This will possibly annoy some of my readers. They will wish to say to me, "But GOD has given us the gift of reason ; surely He means us to make use of it ?" This is perfectly true. GOD *has* given us this great gift of reasoning, and GOD forbid that I should ever suggest that He does not mean us to use it. Use it we must, if we are to remain above the level of the lowest of the lower animals. I have no desire whatever that anyone should swallow blindly without consideration the doctrines and dogmas of Holy Church. We wish each individual to think for

himself; that is only reasonable. We only plead that men and women will study both sides of the question fairly, and not allow themselves to be won over by the cheap and superficial arguments that the teaching of the Church's Creeds is "against reason," "against Nature," "against Science." We cannot expect to *understand* fully the mysteries of GOD, Who is infinitely above and beyond us mortal men and women. After all, faith plays a large part in our everyday life, and it is certainly "against reason" to suppose that in the realm of Religion, of all things, it has no place at all. We reason—and quite rightly—from what we know. But at least let us beware of reasoning from what we don't know. Our knowledge is so very limited. The foremost men of science are the first to admit that. They will tell you candidly that we are as yet at the very edge of the sea of knowledge, still paddling merely ankle-deep in it. They are the last people to assert that, because they do not understand this or that, therefore this or that is impossible. And in this connection I would quote certain

remarks made by the late Professor Huxley. "I have not," he wrote, "the slightest objection to offer *à priori* to any of the propositions in any of the three Creeds. . . . The mysteries of the Church are child's play compared with the mysteries of Nature." And again, "Modern physiology can show parallels in Nature for events of seemingly the most supernatural kind in any of the Gospels." And yet again : "There is no such thing as an impossibility, except such as involves an actual contradiction in terms. It may be *improbable* that a man should walk on the water, or be born without human intervention, or rise again from the dead ; *but we cannot say that such things are impossible*. We are only at the very beginning of our knowledge of Nature, and we can set no bounds to her possibilities."

Now when such statements as these are the deliberate judgment of that world-famous biologist, surely it is somewhat presumptuous of the "man-in-the-street," with his comparatively puny intellect, to assert that he declines to believe in, e.g. the Virgin Birth, or our

LORD'S miraculous works, or His Resurrection from the dead, on the ground that such things are "not possible"? True, the great Professor, whom I have quoted, was not himself a believer, but not for any such reason as this. He rejected the Church's teaching, not, as we have seen, because he supposed it "impossible," but because he did not deem that there was sufficient historical evidence for it. This is a very different thing. But no one surely is justified in rejecting the Gospel story, unless he has really convinced himself, by full and unbiassed study, that it is not true history. And that is just what I hope to be able to show you that it is.

But here again it is necessary to add a word of warning. What is "true history"? We must never forget the all-important fact that it rests on long-continued *tradition*. That great Bishop and historian, the late Dr. Mandell Creighton—by his own request before he died, the epitaph inscribed upon his tomb runs, "He tried to write true history"—speaks somewhere to the following effect: "How do I know that

such a person as Julius Cæsar ever existed? A very little ingenuity could be made to show that his writings are forgeries, and he himself a mere legendary name. It is only because of the unbroken *tradition* from his day until now." So it is with regard to the Resurrection. It has behind it nineteen centuries of tradition; and, before we reject it, we have to explain the fact that it was upon the alleged fact of the Resurrection that the Christian Church was originally founded, the Church which is still alive, and has spread into every corner of the earth.

And, thirdly—and let me urge this with all the earnestness at my command—do not imagine that it is too late; that you are too old to come back to the faith of your childhood; that you have wandered too long, or too far away. It matters not if, like the Israelites, you have been wandering in a spiritual wilderness forty years or more: it is never too late to find a way out or back. The longer and farther you have wandered from the Great Shepherd of Souls, the more loving will be His welcome on your return. You have

merely to turn round and face the other way, and you will find Him awaiting you with outstretched arms. He never grows impatient, He never lets us out of His sight. As He Himself once said, He comes to seek and to save those that were lost. Listen to His pleading: "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Notice the word "all." He makes no exceptions whatever. "Whoso cometh unto Me, I will *in no wise* cast him out." And then the triumph that follows: "I say unto you that there is more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, rather than over ninety and nine self-righteous persons, who think that they need no repentance."

Whether, then, yours has been a case of honest doubt (and there are probably few that have thought at all deeply or seriously about the matter, who have not passed through the phase of doubt); or whether you have lapsed into careless indifference, or even into deliberate neglect, it matters not; it is never too late to come back.

But have things gone even farther than this? Have you, in wandering away from the Good Shepherd, wandered nearer to the Arch-Enemy of souls? Have you, in your neglect of prayer, of worship, of sacrament, fallen into mortal sin? I say again, it is never too late. Only exclaim, with the father of the epileptic boy, "LORD, I believe! Help Thou mine unbelief!" Only cry, with the humble publican, "GOD, be merciful to me, a sinner!" And I say that your feet are already set upon the road of repentance and of hope.

Not very long ago I was staying at the London Mission House of the S.S.J.E., that noble body of Priests, who, giving up literally everything they possess to the service of CHRIST, abjuring the world and its affections, taking upon themselves the lifelong vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, spend their whole lives unceasingly and ungrudgingly, in one or other of four continents, in the service of the Master, and the enlargement of His Kingdom upon earth. And there, in a book¹ written by one

¹ *The Interior Light*, by the Rev. Fr. Congreve, S.S.J.E.

of their number, I came across the following incident.

Nearly fifty years ago, one of them was travelling to Scotland to conduct a Retreat. In the railway carriage he entered into conversation with a stranger, to whom he mentioned the object of his journey, and explained something of the nature of Retreats, and the wonderful spiritual help and strength afforded by them. The stranger seemed interested. "Well," he said at last, "my journey should really end at York; but if you can find room for me I should like to come on with you, and join in the Retreat." He did so; and on the last morning, before those taking part in it had separated, he begged leave to tell them what great things GOD had done for him. He was, it appeared, an ordained clergyman; though for many years he had entirely ceased to exercise any of the functions of his sacred office. Long ere this he had lapsed into indifference towards GOD, and into deadly sin. I know not which had come first, but the one had led to the other, as it only too often does.

And now for many years he had been living an abandoned and profligate life, ever drifting farther and farther away from GOD, and daily adding sin to sin, until he had fallen into that final and most fatal sin of all, the sin of hopeless despair. By chance, or rather by the mercy of GOD, he had fallen in with the Conductor of the Retreat, and had been moved to take part in it. There the HOLY SPIRIT had convicted him of his sin; had shown him himself, as he appeared in the sight of Almighty GOD. He had been led to make his first Confession, and for the first time in his life he had heard the blessed sentence of Absolution: "By His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins. . . . Go in peace, and sin no more." Words, whose immeasurable comfort can never be apprehended, however dimly, by those who are still waiting to make their first Confession. And having thus courageously told them his tragic story, he now announced to them his unshakable purpose to go forth from that Retreat and devote the remainder of his life to the service of the Master

Whom he had betrayed ; to do everything in his power towards making some amends for his terrible apostasy. And so he left them. In less than a week that clergyman was lying in his grave. Instead of dying a hardened, impenitent sinner, cut off suddenly and without hope in the midst of his shame and his despair, he had by GOD'S mercy even at the eleventh hour been led to the foot of the Cross ; he had offered the one sacrifice that GOD will never despise, the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart ; he had passed, a humble penitent, his sins forgiven, into the presence of the Risen Saviour.

II

THE EMPTY TOMB—AN HISTORICAL FACT

*"Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, . . .
and he saw, and believed."*—ST. JOHN XX. 8.

SAW what? What was the sight that met the eager, wondering gaze of the Beloved Disciple as he looked into the Tomb where so lately the Body of his dear LORD and Master had been laid to rest; the sight that convinced him beyond all possible doubt that the story brought by Mary Magdalene was no mere idle tale after all; that the LORD had risen indeed?

We will leave the answer to that question for the moment, for I wish to take you back in thought for a few minutes to the events of the preceding week. You remember how that, throughout their Master's ministry, the minds of His disciples were set on a great earthly kingdom. True, He had warned them several

times of His coming Betrayal and Passion and Death ; but this was clearly due to His evident fits of depression. “ Be it far from Thee, LORD : this shall never be unto Thee.” That His Kingdom was not of this world, and that in order to attain to it He must first endure the pain and desolation of the Cross—this they could not, or would not believe. No, the Master was merely biding His time. At the right moment He would give the Jewish nation some indisputable sign from Heaven, that even the obstinate chief priests and rulers could not but acknowledge. And having thus convinced them that He was indeed GOD’s own Messiah, He would forthwith proceed to muster an invincible band of ardent patriots. With Himself at their head, they would sweep the hated Roman foreigner for ever from the shores of the Holy Land ; the Chosen People would once again be free ; He, their LORD and Master, would be triumphantly seated on David’s ancient throne ; and they, His faithful followers, would reap the full reward of their loyal and devoted service.

Such was their ever-present dream. And surely on Palm Sunday it did look as though it were approaching realization. How they exulted as He rode in majestic triumph towards the ancient capital, attended by the thronging crowds that acclaimed Him as the long-expected Messiah, the Prince of David's line ! How proud at heart they felt the following day as He—their own beloved Master—imperiously swept the Temple courts of that ignoble crew of sacrilegious profiteers, acclaiming the sacred edifice as His own Father's House ! How they rubbed their hands with glee on the Tuesday, the great Day of Questions, as He skilfully turned the tables on one party after another of His malignant adversaries, who sought to entangle Him in His speech ! Oh yes ! They had been right, after all : their hopes would be realized very shortly now ; the King was surely coming into His Kingdom. And so completely do they allow themselves to be deceived, that even at the Last Supper, but twelve hours ere He was to tread the Way of the Cross, we find them actually wrangling with one another

as to which of them should be the greatest in the coming triumph.

And then, like a bomb-shell in their midst, there fall from His lips the fateful words: "Verily, I say unto you, that one of you will betray Me." And all their hopes are scattered to the winds. There follows the fitful slumber in the Garden during the hour of His bitter agony; the rude awakening; the flash of torches; the clank of arms; the kiss of treachery; the arrest; and in the panic of the moment they all flee for their lives and abandon Him to His fate. The hideous unreality of that ghastly night; the cruel blows; the still more cruel sneers; then, the next morning, the savage passions of that fickle mob let loose, like some fierce beast of prey snarling for its food; the Scourge; the Cross; and all is over; the lifeless Body is laid in the Tomb, and all their fondest hopes and aspirations are buried with Him.

Poor Apostles! Picture them as they slink back by deserted bypaths to the house of the Upper Room, utterly dazed by the hideous

events of the day, too cowed and heartsick even to discuss them. It had all been so sudden and unexpected. Who could have foreseen it? Alas for their hopes of an earthly kingdom! All was over now; they would never see Him again. What a blank, drab thing life would be, now that He was taken from them! And oh! the anguish they felt at the remembrance of their cowardly desertion! What a bitter thought it was that they would never have an opportunity of expressing their contrition and asking His forgiveness. And St. Peter—he who, terrified by a maidservant's taunts, had thrice denied, with oaths and curses, the Master, for Whom in his calmer moments he would so gladly and bravely have died; for Whom in days to come he did so gladly and bravely die—could he ever hold up his head again? And so at last they creep wearily to bed, only to awaken in the morning to that dull, aching sense of void, which only those who have lost their nearest and dearest can possibly comprehend. And so another day drags wearily by, for they dare not venture

out of doors, to be exposed, if not to actual arrest, at any rate to the cruel jibes and taunts of every passer-by. In the whole world's history, I sometimes wonder, could we anywhere find a body of men more completely crushed and cowed, more deeply sunk in heartsick, hopeless despair?

Turn over a few pages! Turn to those marvellous chapters at the beginning of the Acts, surely sufficient to convince the most confirmed sceptic! What an amazing change! The same men, the very same; yet somehow completely transfigured. No longer afraid to show themselves abroad, they are fearlessly facing crowds that number thousands; no longer sunk in the depths of despair, they are brimming over with a strange, ecstatic, and wholly irrepressible joy. No longer apathetic with misery, they are all alive with ardent activity; and foremost among them he who in the panic of the moment had thrice denied the Master he so dearly loved. Their whole moral nature is completely transformed: the cravens have become heroes; the humble disciples have become public

leaders ; the toilers of the sea have become fishers of men ; the peasants of Galilee have become the Princes of the Church.

Now something had happened. Men's lives and characters, their personalities and talents, their very outlook on life¹—these things are not suddenly and completely changed for no reason whatever. And what that something was we clearly learn from St. Peter's great sermon on Pentecost Day. JESUS of Nazareth, whom the Jews had put to death as a common criminal, had risen from the dead ; they were witnesses of the fact. He had, after all, vindicated His claim to be the Messiah foretold by the Prophets, the CHRIST, the Incarnate SON of GOD. They cannot keep the joyous news to themselves.

Christ is risen ! Christ is risen !

He hath burst His bonds in twain.

¹ It is very significant that since the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day all thoughts of an earthly Kingdom have completely disappeared. The only *reward* to which they now look forward on earth is that of persecution and suffering and death. A striking comment on St. John xvi. 13.

This is the burden of their exultant song ; this is why they are so entirely fearless of all that may befall them.

Jesus lives ! No longer now
Can thy terrors, Death, appal us.

He had always hated the words “ death ” and “ dead.” “ Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me *shall never die.*” And now He had proved in His own Person that there is no such thing as “ death ” ; that what men call by that grisly and misleading name is “ but the gate to life immortal.” No wonder they are so fearless of whatever may befall them ! And so they proclaim to all who will listen the joyous tidings of the Resurrection.

Now mark the result of this preaching. It brings them into collision with the two leading religious sects of the Jews—the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sadducees, the advanced Modernist Churchmen of the day, who sought to rob religion of all the beauty of holy mystery, strenuously denied, not only the existence of angels and spirits, but all possibility of a life beyond the grave. When a man was dead, he

was dead, and there was an end of him ! And now they are confronted by a handful of men who are everywhere proclaiming that JESUS of Nazareth has risen from the dead. If this be true, it means that their pet theory is exploded ; all that differentiates them from other Jews is shown to be false ; their very existence as a religious sect is threatened. At all costs this new teaching must be stopped, and promptly.

And the Pharisees ? They, it is true, believed in an existence beyond the grave, and even in a general resurrection at the end of the world. But to be told that a man had risen from the dead within thirty-six hours of death ; and that man, of all men, the hated and despised JESUS of Nazareth, the man who had dared openly at the street corners and in the market-places to brand them as hypocrites, and to hold up to the scorn of the common people all their pet sins and shortcomings ; the man who had had the audacity to tell them to their faces that the very publicans and harlots should enter the Kingdom of God before them ; and

that they—the virtuous Pharisees, the acknowledged religious leaders of the “orthodox” party!—had merely succeeded in rendering the Word of God of none effect by their tradition; the man, finally, whom they had successfully hounded to the shameful death of the vilest felon—to be told that he, of all men, had risen from the dead, and that he really was, as he had impiously claimed to be, none other than the Son of GOD Himself—oh, this was too much! No wonder the haughty Pharisees refused to swallow a pill so bitter.

Sadducees and Pharisees, then, are alike determined to put a stop to such destructive teaching. The Apostles are arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. But, face to face with that once-dreaded Court of Justice, they show no sign of fear, calmly asserting that they choose to obey GOD rather than man. The Sanhedrin utter dire threats as to what will befall them, if ever they preach such doctrine any more; and forth from their presence the Apostles go, only to do exactly the same thing all over again. Once more

they are arrested ; and this time the Sanhedrin, losing all patience, orders them to be beaten with rods. But, strange to say, the cruel stripes have no more effect than the threats. The Apostles go their way rejoicing—mark that word !—that they were accounted worthy to suffer dishonour for His Name. Yes, I think we can understand their joy, can we not, that their dear Master was allowing them this opportunity of making some amends for their cowardly desertion of Him on that terrible night ; of proving that they really were more courageous, more loyal to Him, than they had shown themselves in the panic of that awful moment ? And so, defiant of the Sanhedrin's prohibitions, careless alike of threats and penalties, we read that “every day, in the Temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ.”¹ And meanwhile the Sanhedrin can only sit in their Council-chamber impotently raving, and uttering all manner of futile threats.

But why did the Sanhedrin, that all-powerful

¹ Acts v. 32.

Court of Justice, at the mention of whose dread name the stoutest heart would quail, permit such a state of things to continue? Why did they allow their authority to be set at defiance day after day by this little handful of men; their threats to be openly ignored; Jerusalem to be turned upside-down by this new teaching; hundreds, aye, thousands of converts to be drawn away from Judaism, including even many of the Jewish priests themselves? Why? For the reason that the Truth will not and cannot be suppressed. Here was but a tiny band of men, the followers of the most hated and despised teacher of the day—a teacher who had suffered the death of the meanest slave; yet in the face of enormous and bitterly hostile crowds, whose hands are itching to tear them to pieces, they proclaim what is seemingly the most preposterous story ever invented, a story nicely calculated to inflame the savage passions of that cruel mob that shouted “Crucify!” All the forces of the day, ecclesiastical, social, political, are in full array against them; and yet *they win through*; that seemingly pre-

posterous story prevails, as the Truth ever must and shall prevail.

But has it occurred to you what a delightfully simple means the Sanhedrin had of putting a stop to the whole movement—that is, of course, provided the Apostles' story were untrue? Threats had failed, stripes had failed, imprisonment had failed. But there was a far simpler, far more efficacious remedy than any of these—if the Apostles' story were untrue. *Why did they not roll away the stone before the tomb where Jesus of Nazareth had been buried, and show the people His dead body still lying there?* That would have put a stop, and an effective stop, to such teaching. The Apostles would have been hounded out of Jerusalem amid the jeers and derision of the whole population. The story of the Resurrection would never have been heard of again, save as a byword of mockery. Christianity would have been strangled at its birth: it would have ceased to exist wellnigh ere it had begun to live.

Ah! but we know that the Sanhedrin did visit the Tomb for that very purpose; that

they found it empty, the Body gone ; and so they were obliged to have recourse to that palpably absurd invention, that the writer of the First Gospel tells us was still the accepted " explanation " of the Empty Tomb among the Jews, when he wrote some forty years or so later, and which Justin Martyr mentions as still current among them nearly a century after that : " They gave large money to the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept." I called this a " palpably absurd " story ; for if the Roman soldiers were asleep when the Body disappeared, how could they possibly assert that it was stolen away by the disciples ? If they were asleep, how were they in a position to deny the truth of the Resurrection ? Such an " explanation " will not hold water for a moment.

No, explain it away as men do (or try to do), the failure of the Sanhedrin to produce the dead Body of JESUS CHRIST, and thereby to refute the Apostles' story of the Resurrection, is conclusive proof of the fact of the Empty

Tomb. Somehow or other the Sacred Body had disappeared, and the Jewish authorities were entirely unable to account for it. And, in this connection, I may quote the testimony of the well-known German-Swiss critic Schenkel. Daniel Schenkel (1813-1885), Professor of Theology at Heidelberg, belonged to the school of "advanced" critics, who seek to rob our Divine LORD of His true Deity. Yet being, at any rate, an honest man, Schenkel finds himself obliged to make this remarkable admission : " It is an indisputable fact that in the early morning of the first day of the week following the Crucifixion, the tomb of Jesus was found empty."

But it may be objected : " Granted that there seems to be no getting away from the fact of the Empty Tomb, is it not conceivable, after all, that the Body was stolen away ? " This is a perfectly reasonable criticism ; I hope to deal with it at full length in my next essay. I hope to be able to show you that, whoever be the alleged robbers, not only is there not one shred of evidence against them, but that

all the circumstances point in exactly the opposite direction. And having triumphantly acquitted each of the accused parties in turn of any possible complicity in such a deed, I shall conclude by trying to answer the question with which I began: What was it that St. John saw, on looking into the Tomb, that convinced him, instantaneously and beyond all doubt, that JESUS CHRIST had come back from the realms of so-called Death?

NOTE

It may be objected that the extraordinary change in the lives and characters of the Apostles, which I have tried to depict, was due to the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, rather than to the actual Resurrection. This criticism would be, in part at least, justified. But, on the other hand, the Pentecostal Gift was entirely dependent on the Resurrection and Ascension. Had not our LORD risen from the dead, thereby vindicating His claim to be the Eternal SON of GOD, He obviously would

not have been in a position to send "Another Comforter."

In any case, the Apostles' sorrow had been turned into joy before the Day of Pentecost (*vide* St. Luke xxiv. 52 ; St. John xx. 20).

III

THE EMPTY TOMB—*concluded*

IN the last chapter I tried to show you that, however men may try to "explain" it, there is no getting away from the fact of the Empty Tomb. Somehow or other, during the short interval between the Friday evening and the Sunday morning, the Body of JESUS CHRIST had mysteriously disappeared. But for this fact, indeed, the story of the Resurrection could never have arisen; for had the Body remained in the Tomb, it would obviously have precluded the very possibility of such a story. We may therefore accept as an historical certainty the fact of the Empty Tomb; to which, indeed, as we saw last time, the bitterest enemies of Christianity, the Jews themselves, accorded unwilling witness.

But, it may be argued, is it not possible that the Body was stolen away? There is also another "explanation," that has from time to

time been preferred by some who, while admitting the fact of the Empty Tomb, are unwilling to accept the Gospel story : namely, that JESUS CHRIST never died upon the Cross at all, but merely swooned. The cool air of the rock-cave, together with the scent of the aromatic spices, it is suggested, revived Him, and He managed to make His escape ; and so arose the “ legend ” of the Resurrection. I will deal with this “ explanation ” first.

Let us frankly admit that there are cases on record of men who recovered after apparent death consequent upon crucifixion. But is this even conceivable in the case of JESUS CHRIST ? I think not, when we come to examine the circumstances. To begin with, it would imply gross deception and hypocrisy on His part (not to say, on the part of His Apostles)—a thing wholly unthinkable in the light of His life and teaching. Again, what became of Him after His supposed escape from the Tomb ? Where did He hide ? With gaping wounds in Hands and Feet and Side, how could He possibly have escaped being seen and recognized by His

enemies, who swarmed on every side? But, to grasp the full absurdity of this "explanation," it is necessary to realize the nature of the Tomb. This was a cave, artificially hewn out of the rock. The doorway must have been of sufficient height and width to permit a couple of men to enter bearing a dead body. Even when we allow for stooping, it can scarcely have been less than four feet in height. In front of this opening, sunk in a groove in the ground, was a flat, circular stone. In order to cover the opening completely, this stone must have been not less than five feet in diameter. So heavy indeed was it, that certain ancient MSS. of St. Luke's Gospel state that it required more than twenty men to move it. This, of course, would be from the outside. But from within the Tomb it would have been wholly impossible for any number of men to move it, for obviously they would be unable to get any purchase upon it with their fingers. Yet certain self-styled "critics," in different ages, have asked us to believe that this impossible feat was achieved by one man, a man with gaping

wounds in hands and feet, and a great spear-thrust in his side !

Now let us discuss the Robber Theory. So far as I can see, there were four (only) parties who could conceivably have had a hand in such a supposed theft, namely, the Romans, the Jews, the Apostles (or other friends of our LORD), and ordinary robbers. Let us take each of these in turn.¹

It has been suggested that the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate himself, gave orders for the removal of our LORD's Body from the Tomb. Why? Because, it is alleged, he feared that the Disciples might organize pilgrimages to the Tomb ; at least, that their manifestations of sorrow would cause annoyance to the Jews, and lead to rioting. Does this sound probable? Let us try to put ourselves in Pilate's position, and see the outlook from his point of view. He has just had executed a man who is apparently all but friendless. At any rate, no one (save

¹ I am indebted for the following line of thought (which I have tried to work out at considerable length) to a brilliant series of sermons by the Rev. N. P. Williams, published some years ago in the *Church Times*.

Pilate's own wife) had come forward to say a kind word on his behalf. A few women had wept for him; one Joseph had buried him; but, with these exceptions, the whole city seemed to execrate him. And even if he had a following, the shameful manner of his death must effectively have dispelled all ideas of hero-worship. Pontius Pilate, with all his faults, was an astute man. Can we really suppose that he was afraid of riots at this man's grave? And if he was, would he not be going the very way to work to cause them, if he ordered the Body to be disturbed in its last resting-place? Had not the Jews expressly warned him that, unless he took every precaution to ensure its remaining there, the disciples might remove it and proclaim to the world that He had risen from the dead? Then there would be trouble indeed! No, I think we may safely acquit Pontius Pilate of any such colossal blunder as that. Moreover, there is another objection to this theory, and, as it seems to me, a fatal one. The Roman criminal law, harsh as it was towards the living, never, under any circum-

stances, pursued the dead. Only twice during the long list of persecutions of Christianity do we read of exceptions to this rule ; and these are only very partial exceptions. During the persecutions at Lyons and Vienne, under Marcus Aurelius, towards the end of the second century, the ashes of the Christian martyrs were thrown into the river ; while in the persecutions under Diocletian, at the beginning of the fourth century, the victims were in many instances drowned ; the object in either case being to deprive them of Christian burial. But—so far as I am aware, at least—there is not one case on record of a body being tampered with after actual burial. Pilate, bad, cruel man as he was, would have shrunk in superstitious horror from any such sacrilegious desecration of the Tomb. Moreover, those of us who have lived in Oriental countries know well how impossible it would be for any such act to occur unseen. In the East there are eyes and ears everywhere, by night as well as by day ; and had anything of the sort been carried out, or even attempted, the news would have been all over the city

the following morning. And, on the top of all these formidable objections, this theory entirely fails to explain the subsequent extraordinary change in the Apostles' lives and characters.

We pass to the Jews. In the first place, there is the objection of ceremonial defilement. Any Jew who touched a corpse was thereby rendered "unclean." Moreover, as we have already seen, the Jewish authorities had even stronger motives than the Romans for leaving our LORD'S Body where it was. "Sir," they said to Pontius Pilate, "we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead, and the last error will be worse than the first."¹ No, most emphatically it was not the Jews, if anyone at all, who stole the Body away. Moreover, if the Jews had possession of our LORD'S Body, why did

¹ St. Matthew xxvii. 63, 64.

they not produce it, and so refute the Apostles' story of the Resurrection? They might well have feared to do this openly, but at least they could have left It lying where it would sooner or later be discovered.

We come to the Apostles themselves. So far as I am aware, at least, no critic of the day, with any pretensions whatever to scholarship, holds this view, and for obvious reasons. For it would mean that, not only were the Apostles despicable liars and hypocrites, but that Christianity itself, admittedly the most potent force for good that the world has ever known; Christianity, which has raised nation after nation from degradation to self-respect, from savagery to civilization, from the darkness of superstition to the clear light of truth; Christianity, which has already lasted nineteen centuries, and has made its influence felt in every corner of the earth, is founded, not even on a mere delusion, but on a gigantic and impudent fraud. "By their fruits ye shall know them. Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?" Nor could such a theory in any

way account for the complete transformation in the Apostles themselves. How could these men have dared to face the bitterly hostile crowds with so pitifully unconvincing a story, had not they themselves been convinced beyond all shadow of doubt that it was true? What conceivable motives could they have had for doing so? What could they stand to gain by it? Such a policy, in the very nature of things, could only lead to imprisonment, and torture, and death, as indeed it did. Men may become martyrs for a delusion, never for a deliberate lie. Let would-be critics say that the Apostles were mistaken, if they must, but not that they were guilty of fraudulent hypocrisy.

Moreover, it is very significant that in all the trials recorded in the Acts of the Apostles the charge of having stolen away the Body is never brought against them. Although the Jewish authorities trumped up this absurd "explanation" for the benefit of the common people, they themselves evidently attached no importance to it. No less significant is the fact that, whereas the Apostles proclaimed the fact

of the Resurrection on the very spot where it was alleged to have occurred, and within a very short time of its occurrence, the Jewish leaders make no real attempt to refute it. They can only resort to violence—the last argument of despair. They threaten, they imprison, they scourge; but, with regard to the Apostles' statement that JESUS of Nazareth had risen from the dead, they have no counter-evidence or arguments with which to contest it.¹

Lastly, we come to the ordinary robbers. In the first place, there is the wellnigh insuperable difficulty (which applies equally to the Jews and to the Apostles) of getting past the Roman soldiers on guard before the Tomb. However, let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that by some inexplicable means the robbers have managed to circumvent this difficulty, that they have broken the seals and rolled back the stone without attracting the attention of the soldiers, and are safely inside the Tomb. What is it that they have come to steal? Either (a) the Body (presumably for the sake of ransom);

¹ See Milligan: *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, pp. 52 ff.

or (b) the costly linen wrappings and precious spices ; or—more probably—(c) both. Now, I think we may safely dismiss (a), for it would imply that they unwrapped the linen bandages, leaving them and the spices in untidy confusion on the floor of the cave. Apart from the fact that this does not agree with St. John's description of the grave-clothes, it is surely inconceivable that robbers would leave behind the costly wrappings and spices. Moreover, why should they waste precious time unwrapping them, when the soldiers just outside might at any moment awake and have them at their mercy ? With regard to (b), we may put this out of court at once, for we know for an historical certainty that the Body disappeared ; (c) is by far the most probable of the three suppositions. Robbers would undoubtedly have carried off the Body just as it was, with the linen bandages and spices surrounding it. St. John, however, tells us that the grave-clothes were left behind. Moreover, what would have been the effect on the minds of the two disciples had they found, not only the seals broken and

the stone rolled back, but—a perfectly empty Tomb? Surely they would have immediately concluded that their Master's Body had been stolen? Remembering the impetuous character of St. Peter, we can imagine how he would have acted, can we not? Dashing round the garden, to look for the gardener; then to Joseph of Arimathæa, to tell him of this desecration of his tomb, back to Jerusalem to let the other Apostles know of this sacrilegious theft of their dear Master's Body. St. Peter! Why, in the frenzy of the moment, we can almost picture him storming the very Prætorium, and demanding justice of Pontius Pilate himself.

But nothing of the kind. For once in his life the impetuous Apostle is dumb with reverent awe. What he actually does see convinces him there and then, and beyond all doubt, that his beloved LORD has come back from the very realms of death; that He is, after all, the Incarnate SON of GOD most High. Nor does the idea of resuscitation even enter his mind. Had he thought for a moment that

the Master had merely recovered from a swoon, he would at once have gone in search of Him, for He could not, in His exhausted state, be very far away. As it is, however, the Apostle turns from the Tomb and goes quietly away to his own home, "wondering within himself at that which was come to pass."

What, then, was it that the two disciples saw?

Some thirty years or so ago, the priest who prepared me for Confirmation impressed upon me the wonderful significance of the *Witness of the Grave-clothes*. Curiously enough, I have never heard this mentioned since, either from the pulpit or in private conversation. But not long ago I was reading for the first time that remarkable book by Henry Latham, "The Risen Master," in which this same line of thought is developed in a very striking and fascinating manner. Let me try to summarize his argument as briefly and concisely as I can. Do you remember the phrase used of Lazarus of Bethany, whom our LORD raised from the dead? "He was bound hand and foot with the grave-clothes." And our LORD's first com-

mand was, "Loose him and let him go." In Eastern countries, before a dead body is carried out to burial, it is wrapped round and round from the feet to the neck with several lengths of linen. In the case of our LORD, no less than one hundred pounds weight of costly spices had been inserted between the folds of the wrappings. And what the two disciples saw was simply this: the linen bandages still "lying"¹ on the stone ledge; they had not been unwrapped; the precious spices were still between the folds. Save that they had naturally sunk down, it was exactly as though they still encircled the Body. And yet the Body was not there. There was only one explanation of such a phenomenon. It was a case neither of robbery nor of revival from a swoon. No robbers could have carried off the Body, and yet have left the linen bandages in their original position. No mere resuscitated Body could

¹ The Greek word *κείμενα* is in a very emphatic position, virtually equivalent to "lying undisturbed," or "lying in their original position." So of "the napkin that was about His Head," the perfect passive participle *ἐντετυλιγμένον* is used, signifying "having been rolled up, and still so remaining." Vide Latham, *op. cit.* pp. 42 ff.

have escaped from the winding-sheets, without first unwinding them, and scattering the precious spices about the floor. No, the LORD of Life had come back from the realms of death. Whether it was owing to His Eternal Deity, or to His stainless Humanity, "it was not possible that He should be holden of it . . . neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption." He had but lingered to preach the good tidings to the spirits "in prison,"¹ and within thirty-six hours of death the corruptible had put on incorruption, the mortal immortality. His Sacred Body had been mysteriously glorified, spiritualized, etherialized—call it what you will—and so had passed through the grave-clothes without disturbing a single fold. Under the circumstances it was useless to go in search of Him—He might be anywhere. And so, as we have already noted, the two Apostles quietly return to their own homes.

Is it not a truly wonderful story? And, to my mind, what gives it such overwhelming force of conviction is the entire absence of

¹ St. Peter iii. 18-20; cf. iv. 6:

elaborate explanation. Had the writer been giving his imagination free play, he must inevitably have entered upon the most minute details as to the appearance of the grave-clothes ; he would have explained just why he and his companion felt so convinced ; he would have described their feelings of amazement and rapture. As it is, we are simply told, "He beholdeth the linen clothes lying . . . and he saw, and believed." The simple fact is stated, and we are left to draw the conclusion.

Pray we earnestly that we be not tempted to establish our religion on the treacherous, ever-shifting, sandy soil of the human intellect, rather than on the firm, unyielding rock of faith. Some people seem to imagine because they cannot understand, e.g. the Virgin-Birth or the Bodily Resurrection of our Blessed LORD, that therefore such things must be impossible with GOD. It does not seem to occur to these good people that, were we capable of understanding fully all Divine mysteries, we should be gods ourselves. Here in this life, with our poor limited human brains, we must be

content to see as in a glass darkly. A little patience, a little trusting faith, and hereafter we shall see face to face, we shall know even as we are known. Intellect, scholarship, cold reason and logic, original thinking, these are all very excellent things in their way, and they have their proper uses. But our LORD asked for something very different from any of them : " Except ye be converted and become as little children " (i.e. except ye show the simple, trusting faith of little children), " ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven." It is His own solemn warning, and we shall do well to heed it.

Which of the two are we going to accept ? The simple, straightforward narrative of St. John, with its unmistakable ring of truth ? Or the elaborate, far-fetched, self-contradictory " explanations " of modern " critics," who would have us believe that the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ is " a later invention of the Church " ? I say without hesitation that, if the story of the Resurrection be a mere myth, then Christianity is a mere lie. Which of the two are we going to believe ?

IV

FOUR CORROBORATIVE PIECES OF TESTIMONY

“And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread.”—ACTS xx. 7.

WE have considered the evidence for the Empty Tomb, and we came to the conclusion, I think, that we are fully justified in regarding it as an historical fact. We saw how wildly improbable—I think, indeed, we may say how impossible—it is that that fact can be explained away, either by the supposition that our LORD never died upon the Cross at all : that He merely swooned, and afterwards came to Himself and made His escape ; or, on the other hand, by the suggestion that His sacred Body was stolen from the Tomb. The only remaining explanation is the Gospel story, attested by nineteen centuries of tradition, that He rose again from the dead. Finally, we saw how that belief is borne out by the

witness of the grave-clothes, that striking phenomenon that convinced St. Peter and St. John, instantaneously and beyond all possibility of doubt, that the LORD had risen indeed.

And now we come to what I have termed Four Corroborative Pieces of Testimony. And the first of these is the change from Judaism to Christianity, from the Dispensation of Moses to the Catholic Church of CHRIST.

Now let us bear in mind the fact that the Apostles (and all others of the earliest converts to Christianity) were orthodox Jews, born and bred in the traditions of the Law and the Prophets, in the worship of the Synagogue and the Temple. How, then, did they come to isolate themselves from the religious community around them, and to form themselves into a separate body? How came they to abandon Judaism, that venerable dispensation ordained of GOD Himself? Surely it was unpardonable presumption on the part of mere human beings (unless, indeed, they had unprecedented and unexceptionable reasons for doing so) to cast aside the institutions of the

LORD JEHOVAH, and to substitute for it another dispensation altogether, with aims and principles peculiar to itself? They stood to gain nothing by it from a worldly point of view. On the contrary, it was only too obvious that they must inevitably incur the bitter hatred and contempt of all around them, as indeed they did. What possible motive could they have had? Let us try to put ourselves in their position, and examine the outlook from their point of view; and then ask ourselves how we should have acted in their place, had the Cross been the actual end. And what is the outlook? The Master has just failed us miserably. He has disappointed all our fondest hopes and expectations. Instead of proving Himself by some indisputable sign to be the Royal Messiah (as we felt sure He was just about to do), He has weakly, and without the slightest attempt at resistance, allowed Himself to be betrayed and taken prisoner. Instead of leading us in triumphant insurrection against the hated Roman foreigners, and reigning thereafter as Monarch of GOD'S Chosen People, He has been

subjected to every form of degradation and insult, and has finally been put to the most shameful death a man can die, the death of the meanest slave, the death of the vilest felon. And for ourselves, we are left leaderless, even as sheep without a shepherd. He, to Whom we trusted for everything, has left us for ever. We are left with aching hearts to face the future all alone; alone in our dumb agony to face that cowardly mob, to listen to its cruel sneers and merciless laughter. He is dead, and all our hopes and expectations are buried in His grave.

Such is the outlook before us—if the Cross was indeed the end. Can we, then, by any stretch of the imagination, conceive ourselves acting as the Apostles forthwith proceeded to act: forming ourselves into a society whose *raison d'être* is the proclaiming to the scoffing world around us that He, Whom it has recently nailed to the Cross, is, as a matter of fact, the Divine Son of GOD, LORD of the whole universe, the Source of the forgiveness of sins and of universal salvation? Can we? Can we con-

ceive ourselves thus insanely trying to convert a bitterly hostile world by so wildly improbable, so pitifully unconvincing a story, unless we know for a positive fact that that story is true? No; on the contrary, our one thought will be to slink away from the scene of shame, to hide ourselves from the scoffing faces around us, to seek refuge, oh! anywhere out of reach of their cruel laughter, their savage taunts—if the Cross was the actual end.

But, if the Cross was not the actual end; if the Master triumphed over Death and came back from the grave; if He showed Himself to us by many infallible proofs to be alive again; if during the Great Forty Days we constantly saw Him, and conversed with Him, and received His instructions for the organization of His Holy Catholic Church militant here in earth; if we actually saw Him disappear from our sight behind a cloud; if, finally, on Pentecost Day we were filled with the life-giving power of His HOLY SPIRIT, Whom He had promised He would send us; then all is explained. We know now, not only that He

was all along the Incarnate Son of GOD (a fact that in the anguish of those two terrible days we had forgotten), but we know also why He chose to come to earth ; why He offered Himself a willing and unresisting Victim upon the Cross. No wonder, if the Resurrection be a fact, that we cannot keep the glad news to ourselves. No wonder that we are ready to face hostility, and persecution, and stripes, and imprisonment, yes, and death itself (for so-called death has lost all its terrors for us now), in order to proclaim to all mankind the wonderful tidings of salvation.

We come next to the substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath as the day of rest and worship. Let us remember, again, that the Sabbath was the day ordained by GOD Himself, from the time when He first breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life.¹ And yet in a moment this startling change is made. If it was not that the Founder of Christianity rose from the dead

¹ Whether or no we are prepared to accept the opening chapters of Genesis as they stand, we must remember that to the orthodox Jews they were sacred history.

on the first day of the week, what was it? How can we otherwise account for it?

So, again, with the institution of Easter Day. We do not know exactly when this first took place,¹ but take place it did. For the Passover—this, too, had been ordained of GOD Himself, and had already been in existence no less than 1400 years—that ancient and most deeply venerated of all the Jewish Feasts, is substituted a Memorial Festival of One Who died a criminal's death. Is this capable of explanation, had the Cross been the real end?

And, lastly, the Holy Eucharist is, in a very special sense, an evidence of the Apostles' conviction as to the positive truth of the Resurrection, and for this reason. Whatever views you and I may hold with regard to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, however widely we may differ in our beliefs as regards, e.g. the Real Presence or the Eucharistic Sacrifice, we are at least agreed on this—that it is a memorial of the death of CHRIST. That is a fact that

¹ The *A.V.* translation in Acts xii. 4, is undoubtedly an anachronism.

none will dispute. "For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the LORD's death till He come."¹ If, then, the Resurrection is a mere fable, if our LORD's life came to an absolute end amid utter failure upon the Cross, what follows? We are actually asked to believe that the Apostles forthwith began to celebrate, Sunday by Sunday, and even day by day, a memorial of the extinction of their own highest hopes and expectations, a memorial of their own utter confusion and despair! Is such a thing even conceivable?

And what was the effect of the Holy Eucharist upon the religious world at large? About eighty years after our LORD's Crucifixion, in the year 112, to be more precise, we find the younger Pliny, Roman Proconsul of Bithynia, complaining to the Emperor Trajan that, owing to the spread of Christianity, the temples of the gods are deserted, the ancient religious customs are fallen into disuse, and no purchasers are to be found for the sacrificial victims. And thus we see, on the evidence of

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

a secular and heathen historian, that even by the beginning of the second century of the Christian era the ancient heathen, blood-bespattered sacrifices are everywhere being ousted by the one "tremendous and unbloody sacrifice" (as the ancient liturgies describe it). Already (less than a century after the Crucifixion) we see the fulfilment of that remarkable prediction of the prophet Malachi: "And in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a *pure* (i.e. unbloody) *offering*: for My name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith the LORD of Hosts."

The Catholic Church of Christ in place of the Judaic Dispensation of Moses; Sunday in place of the Sabbath; Easter in place of the Passover; and in place of the Paschal Lamb the Breaking of the Bread. Four vital and, indeed, revolutionary changes, and not one of them can be accounted for, save on the basis of the Resurrection of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

Easter—Sunday—the Broken Bread! Do not our thoughts instinctively revert to what is one of the most beautiful incidents in the

whole of the New Testament, nay, in the whole of literature? You know the story almost by heart, yet it never fails to present some new touch of beauty. Let us dwell on it for a few minutes.

Two disciples of our Blessed LORD are walking on that memorable Easter Sunday evening from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a distance of about seven and a half miles. They are conversing in low and sad tones about the death of the great Prophet Who, they had so confidently expected, was to redeem the Israelite nation from the bondage of the Roman rule. They are bewildered by a strange rumour they have heard. Certain women, it appeared, had visited the Sepulchre early that very morning, for the purpose of anointing His dead Body, but had found it empty, and had been informed by angels that their dear LORD had risen from the dead. Could such a tale be true? Or was it the mere disordered fancy of hysterical women? They do not know which to think. As they eagerly discuss the matter a stranger overtakes them, and courteously questions them as to the

subject of their conversation, their evident perplexity and distress. They are astonished that he does not guess : there surely can be but one topic of conversation at such a time as this ! They open their hearts to him, however. They tell him of the wonderful Prophet of Nazareth, of Whom they had expected so much, but Whose life had just ended in utter and hopeless failure. He had died the death of the commonest criminal ; and this had upset all their hopes and expectations. And yet there were strange rumours in the air. What are they to believe ? What does the stranger think about it ?

Comes the gentle reproof : “ Ah, foolish ones ! You have entirely failed to grasp the teaching of the Prophets you hear read every Sabbath day. Have you never realized—they foretold it all along—that the Messiah, the CHRIST of GOD, was to be a Suffering Messiah ; that before entering into His glory He must first make Atonement for the human race by offering Himself a willing victim for its sins ? He was ordained to redeem man, yes, but not the Jewish nation from the bondage of Rome, but all

mankind from the far more terrible bondage of Sin." And with that He quotes passage after passage from the Old Testament. He quotes from that wonderful chapter liii. of Isaiah: "He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. . . . As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away." He quotes from Psalm xxii.: "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in God, that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him if He will have Him. . . . They pierced My hands and My feet; I may tell all My bones: they stand staring and looking upon Me. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture."

How the two disciples' hearts burn within them as they listen to the stranger's exposition

of the Scriptures. Now they understand their real meaning. Under the dull, mechanical teaching of the scribes they had entirely failed to grasp their true significance. How minutely these old prophecies had been fulfilled on that terrible Friday, only two days ago! Then—then He *was* the Messiah foretold of the Prophets! This strange rumour must be true, after all! But who can this wonderful stranger be? How comes he to know these things, things that even the Apostles themselves had failed to understand?

They reach their destination. The stranger, apparently, is journeying to another village farther on, but they press him to spend the night with them. "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." They enter the house, and the simple meal is prepared. The stranger, acting as though he were the host, takes one of the unleavened cakes of bread prepared for the Passover week, pronounces a blessing upon it, breaks it into pieces, and hands one to each of his two companions. Ah, their eyes are opened at last!

They know Him now : it is the Master Himself. And the next moment He has vanished out of their sight.

We can afford to smile when sceptics ask us to believe that this story is mere fiction. If there is one incident rather than another in the New Testament that cannot possibly have been mere invention, it is this exquisite and touching account of the walk to Emmaus.

But the story is not yet ended. There is only one thought in the minds of the two disciples—they must let the Eleven know the wonderful news without delay. The very same hour—you will notice the entire absence of doubt or uncertainty—they journey all the way back to Jerusalem, they burst in upon the assembled Apostles, and—I want you to notice the exact wording—“ they rehearsed the things that happened on the way, and *how He was known of them in the breaking of the bread.*”

Never have I forgotten the words, uttered some twenty years ago, by one of the most honoured and saintly leaders of the so-called Evangelical party. I say “so-called,” for I

strongly resent the restriction of that beautiful epithet to any one party in the Church. For, after all, what is an Evangelical but one who believes, and loves, and tries to proclaim the very Gospel of JESUS CHRIST in all its wonderful fullness and beauty? And speaking at the Round Table Conference at Fulham Palace on the subject of the Holy Eucharist, this great Evangelical leader (I am alluding to that saint of GOD, the late Dr. Handley Moule, Bishop of Durham), used these memorable and striking words: "I believe that if our eyes could only be opened, as were the eyes of the two disciples at Emmaus, we should see our Blessed LORD standing in our midst." What a different service it does become when once we have realized this! How can we stay away Sunday after Sunday, when He gives us this unique opportunity of coming into His Sacred Presence, of receiving Him into ourselves? Is it not a wonderful privilege? Does it not seem somewhat thankless and ungracious not to avail ourselves of it? We take very good care to feed our bodies at frequent and regular intervals.

Why should we starve our souls ? This was not the way of the Apostolic Church : the early Christians never dreamed of allowing a Sunday to pass without receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Things are different in the Church of England, thank GOD, at the beginning of the twentieth century, from what they were at the beginning of the nineteenth. Then, we are told, at St. Paul's Cathedral, on Easter Day, there were six communicants ! Still, even to-day there is room for more of that intense fervour, that burning love, that distinguished the Christians of the early Church. And, after all, every Sunday of the year is really an Easter Day : for every Sunday commemorates the great central truth of the Resurrection ; so that, strictly speaking, there should be just as many Communions made on any ordinary Sunday as there are on Easter Day. And if, as I firmly believe, the Church of England is destined to become, in GOD's own good time, the meeting-point and centre of a reunited Christendom, I pray that she may set the example to the rest of the Churches of CHRIST

(for all have lapsed in this respect) of reverting to the Scriptural, Apostolic, truly Catholic and Evangelical custom of Sunday Communion for all.

The LORD's Own Service on the LORD's Own Day. That should be the rule of every Christian in the twentieth century, even as it was the rule of every Christian in the first. And if only we will come with love in our hearts, and an earnest desire to find Him, be sure that He will not fail to make Himself known to us, even as He made Himself known to those two disciples at Emmaus long ago, in the Breaking of the Bread.

V

THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL

"One Jesus, Who was dead, Whom Paul affirmed to be alive."—ACTS xxv. 19.

FROM one point of view, at any rate, the testimony of St. Paul with regard to the Resurrection of our LORD JESUS CHRIST is of even greater value than that of the Gospels themselves, for it comes before them. The earliest of St. Paul's Epistles were written within twenty years of the Crucifixion—probably some ten or twelve years before the first of the Gospels (that of St. Mark) was published. And it is noticeable that St. Paul nowhere attempts to prove the fact of the Resurrection.¹ That is taken for granted :

¹ E.g. in the famous passage, 1 Cor. xv. 12 ff., St. Paul is not attempting, as is sometimes supposed, to prove the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, as a careful study of the passage will show. Certain members of the Corinthian Church were doubtful about their own resurrection at the end of the world, and the Apostle's argument is, "If there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath CHRIST been raised ; and if CHRIST hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is

no Christian thought of disputing it. And this is of itself a very significant piece of testimony. But we may curtail that period of time very considerably. The conversion of St. Paul before the Gate of Damascus took place, at the very latest, only five years after the Crucifixion : some authorities, indeed, hold that it was in the same year. We have, then, the testimony of the Apostle, implied if not actually expressed, that, within five years of our LORD'S Death upon the Cross, the fact of His Resurrection was undisputed in the Christian Church. Now, this is of overwhelming importance, for it at once refutes the so-called "Legend Theory," according to which JESUS of Nazareth was a mere man among men, a great prophet and teacher certainly, and filled with the Spirit of GOD beyond all other men ; but as to His Eternal Godhead, His Birth of a Pure Virgin, His miraculous works, His Rising again from Death, His Ascension into Heaven, the out-vain." He reiterates this argument in vers. 16, 17. And again, "CHRIST is the firstfruits ; then they that are CHRIST'S at His coming " (ver. 23). To St. Paul the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST was the central doctrine of Christianity.

pouring of His Holy Spirit at Pentecost—all these are mere “legends,” invented at a much later date by the Church. I say that the testimony of St. Paul utterly refutes such a theory : for it is inconceivable that, within five years of His having died a criminal’s death, *while the great majority of His followers were still alive*, the Man JESUS could have become transformed, in their imagination, into the Divine CHRIST, and that His Body, which (according to this theory) was all the while mouldering in the Tomb, could have been glorified, and have passed into the realm of Heaven itself.

And, as a matter of fact, few, if any, critics, with any pretensions to scholarship, any longer hold this discredited theory. In the minds of all thoughtful and unbiassed men and women it stands self-condemned.

I said that St. Paul nowhere attempts to prove the fact of our LORD’S Resurrection. Yet he does incidentally, as it were, give us important corroborative testimony of that event. Let me quote a few verses from that wonderful chapter xv. (vv. 3–8) of I Corinthians :

“ For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that CHRIST died for our sins, according to the Scriptures ; and that He was buried ; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures ; and that He appeared to Cephas ; then to the twelve ; then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now ; but some are fallen asleep ; then He appeared to James ; then to all the Apostles ; and, last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He appeared to me also.”

Now observe the definite and precise nature of these statements. Names of living men are given, men who had not only seen, but had conversed and eaten with our LORD after His Resurrection. Notice in particular the statement that He had on one occasion shown Himself to over five hundred persons at once. And mark the characteristic ring of truth about the words that follow : “ Of whom the greater part remain until now, *but some are fallen asleep.*” No one who was deliberately writing fiction, no one who was merely carried away by his

imagination, would have dreamed of adding that last little touch, "but some are fallen asleep."¹ Now, this statement of our LORD's appearance to so large a number at once is of utmost significance; for either this incident actually occurred; or, if it did not, then the falsity of such a statement was very easily capable of exposure. St. Paul had many enemies at Corinth, eager to prove him in the wrong. Here was an excellent opportunity: this was an assertion that could readily be tested, one that could easily be refuted, were it without foundation. The majority of these five hundred and more witnesses were still alive, so the Apostle said. Jerusalem was readily accessible from Corinth. It was the simplest thing to demand the names of some of them and put the story to the test. But St. Paul was on sure and certain ground. He knew better than to run any risk of wrecking the whole Christian

¹ Cf. St. Matthew xxviii. 16, 17: "But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him; *but some* (i.e. *others*) *doubted.*" The last three words are characteristic of the simple truthfulness and transparent honesty of the N.T. writers.

Church by making a statement that was not strictly true. The Resurrection was an historical fact, and there were some hundreds of living witnesses to testify to it. As he afterwards remarked to Herod Agrippa, "This thing was not done in a corner."¹

Then, again, notice the words, "And last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He appeared to me also." And this brings us to one of the most striking incidents in the history of mankind—the Conversion of Saul of Tarsus at the Gate of Damascus. Let us read that wonderful story in the Apostle's own words (Acts xxvi. 4 ff.).

Now, who and what manner of man was Saul of Tarsus? He was by birth "a citizen of no mean city," as he terms it. He was "free-born," a proud privilege, which at that time meant a great deal. More than once does the Apostle take his stand upon it, to save himself from illegal treatment. He had had what we

¹ See a most illuminating chapter (IV) in the *Introduction to 1 Corinthians* (Camb. Gk. Test.), by Chancellor Lias; to which I am indebted for more than one reflection in this paragraph.

should term a University education : indeed, he had been the most distinguished pupil of the most distinguished teacher of the day, the famous Gamaliel himself. As he writes to the Galatians : " For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and made havoc of it ; and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers."¹ He was a man of very considerable prominence and position : young as he was, he was already a member of the Sanhedrin,² the most distinguished honour to which a Jewish layman could aspire. He was a man of entirely fearless character, of iron strength of will, of inflexible tenacity of purpose. He was manifestly a born leader of men. Indeed, we feel instinctively that he was one of those rare geniuses who would climb to the very top of the ladder in almost any walk of life. It is scarcely an

¹ Gal. i. 13, 14.

² Cf. Acts xxvi. 10 : " When they were put to death, I gave my vote against them."

exaggeration to say that, when Saul of Tarsus started forth from Jerusalem upon that memorable journey to Damascus, he had the world at his feet. There was nothing to which he might not have aspired. And yet suddenly he gives up everything : his assured position, his brilliant prospects, his social status, his family ties, the love and admiration of all his old friends, and—most extraordinary of all—his deep-rooted religious convictions. You remember what he says of himself to the Philippians : “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews ; as touching the Law, a Pharisee ; as touching zeal, persecuting the Church ; as touching the righteousness which is found in the Law, found blameless.”¹ And, in exchange for all this, he cheerfully accepts a life of privation and toil, he willingly faces the bitter hatred and unrelenting contempt of all his former friends, hostility, persecution, stoning, imprisonment, stripes above measure. Faithful unto death itself, steadfast and uncomplaining to the end,

¹ Phil. iii. 5, 6.

cheered and sustained in the dark and lonely hours of trial by close communion with the Risen CHRIST, Who had appeared to him at Damascus' Gate. How are we to explain so amazing a transformation in the life and character of this great man, if that wonderful story of his conversion be untrue? Of course, it is very easy to brush it lightly and airily on one side, as certain self-styled critics do; it is easy to say, "Oh yes, we do not dispute the fact that he *thought* he saw something. A touch of the sun, no doubt! Or perhaps a flash of lightning blinded him temporarily, and he imagined all the rest." Yes, it does not require any very deep scholarship or profound thought to argue in this way, does it? But, unfortunately for these people, the facts of the case do not bear out any such "explanation" of the Bible story. Had Saul of Tarsus been a convinced Christian at the time, his whole mind centred on the Risen and Ascended CHRIST, we might at least concede it as a possible explanation that he imagined that he saw such a Vision. But the facts are just the reverse. His heart

was filled with an implacable hatred for the very name of CHRIST; more, he profoundly disbelieved in the very existence of such a Person; the lately crucified JESUS of Nazareth he regarded with the utmost contempt; he scoffed at the very suggestion that He had risen from the dead; he was, in his own words, "exceeding mad against" those who held such heretical and (from his point of view) blasphemous views. And yet, in a moment he is a changed man. Something he sees—Something? or Someone?—that convinces him beyond all question that all this time he has been entirely in the wrong; that these despised Christians are, after all, entirely in the right. He can never forgive himself for his cruelty to the saints. "For I am the least of all the Apostles," he cries in his deep humility, "that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of GOD."¹ His whole life is henceforth transformed; from that moment he fights as ardently for the cause of CHRIST as formerly he had fought against it. The doctrine

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 9.

of the Resurrection, which he had once so savagely attacked, now becomes the very keynote of his teaching. The Cross—and perhaps this is the most remarkable fact of all. Formerly, Saul of Tarsus had been a rigid Pharisee, “a Hebrew of Hebrews.” The very thought of a crucified man had filled him with loathing and disgust, for, as he reminds the Galatians, the Law pronounced such a man to be accursed.¹ The very suggestion that the crucified Nazarene could be the Incarnate SON of GOD filled Saul of Tarsus with honest horror and amazement. In his eyes, such a claim as this was an outrageous and intolerable piece of blasphemy. And yet, so entirely convinced is he that he has been all this while in the wrong, that he can actually write to the Corinthians, “I determined not to know anything among you, save JESUS CHRIST, and Him crucified”;² and again to the Galatians, “GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.”³

And yet there are sceptics who would have us believe that the Vision at Damascus' Gate

¹ Gal. iii. 13.

² 1 Cor. ii. 2.

³ Gal. vi. 14.

was a mere hallucination, a touch of the sun, the effect of a thunderstorm ! Now, in view of the facts we have just been considering, is such an " explanation " even possible ? How could Saul of Tarsus have *imagined* that he saw the Risen and Ascended CHRIST, when he disbelieved in His very existence ? There was no foundation, so to speak, in Saul's mind, upon which any such merely imaginary vision could have been built. All the circumstances point in exactly the opposite direction. He did not believe that there was any such Person ; he abominated the life and teaching of Him Who had been known on earth as JESUS of Nazareth ; he was on his very way to persecute, to imprison, to torture, not only men, but even women, who dared to make the impious claim that He had risen from the dead.

But supposing for a moment that Saul had merely imagined that he saw a vision, what form would such a vision have taken ? Obviously that of an angel ; or, it might have been, of the LORD Jehovah Himself. But it is inconceivable, I repeat, that he should have

imagined that he saw the Risen CHRIST, when, according to him, no such Person existed. No, taking all the circumstances into account, his previous life and upbringing, his deep-rooted religious convictions, his detestation of JESUS of Nazareth, his whole-hearted disbelief in the existence of the Risen CHRIST, it is scarcely too much to say that it is a psychological impossibility that he could merely have imagined that he saw what he tells us he did see, or that he heard what he tells us he did hear. It is futile to attempt to explain away the incident in any such way as this. The Vision of the Ascended CHRIST was no mere trick of a disordered imagination. The cause of Saul's conversion came from without, not from within; it was an objective fact, not a mere subjective fancy.

St. Paul never forgot that Vision. Henceforth he had merely to close his eyes in order to see it again in all its radiant splendour. Small wonder that he regarded the sufferings of his mortal body as of no account. He had beheld the King in all His dazzling beauty. He had seen how the mortal body of this life

becomes transformed into the glorified body of the Resurrection. Small wonder, with such a prospect in view, that he was able to write : " For I reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be hereafter."² Small wonder that he was able to write, again : " For I long to depart and be with CHRIST, which is very far better."¹ Yes, it was that wondrous Vision of the Risen CHRIST that enabled him to endure such daily and hourly anguish of body and mind as few, thank GOD, are called upon to undergo in this life. As that great scholar and saint of GOD, the late Henry Barclay Swete, somewhere remarks : " There is no more wonderful life on record than that of Saul of Tarsus after his conversion ; and every action in that life was what it was, because of the knowledge that he had seen the Divine Master, and had been commissioned by Him to do His service."

You and I may not have seen the Vision of the Risen LORD face to face, but at least we have all received His commission. For we

¹ Romans viii. 18.

² Phil. i. 23.

received it in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, when we were signed with the Sign of the Cross, "in token that hereafter we should not be ashamed to confess the faith of CHRIST Crucified, but manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the Devil." Are we all of us striving to keep that sacred pledge? GOD give to each and every one of us grace to do His service! May we, like St. Paul, caring nothing for the ills of this life, have as our one central aim and object the promotion of the greater glory of GOD and of His CHRIST, and the enlargement of His Kingdom here on earth. And when the time of our departure is at hand, may we too be able to say with the great Apostle, and with no less assurance than he: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."¹

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

VI

THE EVIDENCE OF EXPERIENCE AND THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY

"We speak that we do know."—ST. JOHN iii. 11.

IT was told of a certain well-known priest that during a visit to a friend in the country he was returning from a long solitary ramble when the local doctor happened to pass him in his dog-cart and offered him a lift. The conversation turned on spiritual matters. "Oh, come!" exclaimed the medical man, "you can't expect me to believe those old traditions. All very well for women and children, but not for educated men!" "Doctor," replied the priest, "suppose you had a patient who was dying of an hitherto incurable disease; and suppose that you had discovered an infallible cure for that disease. And then suppose that your patient refused to try the remedy. What would you say of him?" "I should call him every kind of a fool," was the

frank reply. "Quite so," answered the priest. "Doctor, many years ago I was suffering from a disease, a more terrible disease than any you ever had to treat—the disease of sin. One day a good friend put me in the way of curing that disease. I decided to give the remedy a fair trial. I did so, and found that I was cured. Doctor, by what right do you sneer at Christianity, as though it were a quack medicine, seeing that you have never tried it?"

There are many people like that doctor. They will not give Christianity a fair trial. They have never known the Risen and Ascended CHRIST, and they will not try to get to know Him. It may be that they do not wish to know Him; it may be that they are merely indifferent; it may be that through pride of intellect they refuse to believe anything that they do not understand.

I denominated this last the pride of intellect. Is this too harsh a term? Is it not a form of pride, and a wholly unreasonable one, to assume that a thing must be impossible, or even improbable, merely because you or I cannot

comprehend it intellectually? Consider how many things there are in the world around us entirely beyond our intellectual faculties. Yet we do not refuse to believe them. Few, for example, know how the distance of the stars from the earth is measured, or how their composition is ascertained, or how the velocity of a comet is gauged, or how the earth is "weighed." We have only the word of scientific men for these things, yet we have no hesitation in accepting it. Why should it be held necessary that in the matter of religion, of all things, we must understand before we can believe? Again, we have to exercise a great deal of faith in the study of history: indeed, it is really entirely a matter of faith. Yet we accept without hesitation the stories that have come down to us about Alexander the Great, or Socrates, or Julius Cæsar. Why not those about JESUS CHRIST?

The answer, you will say, is obvious. There are certain facts recorded about Him that appear to us to be opposed to the "laws of nature," so far as we have ascertained them. True, but we have to remember how very little

we know as yet of nature's laws. Let me quote once again the weighty words of Professor Huxley: "There is no such thing as an impossibility . . . we are only at the very beginning of our knowledge of Nature, and can set no bounds to her possibilities." And again, "Modern physiology can show parallels in Nature for events of seemingly the most supernatural kind in any of the Gospels."

We must beware, then, of imagining that we have as yet sufficient knowledge to be in a position to say that this or that is "impossible." The foremost men of science are the first to admit this. Let us at least approach the question of the Resurrection without any bias on that score.

And the second point I wish to make is this. What would a religion that we could *understand* be worth? If we believe in God at all, we must acknowledge that He is immeasurably above and beyond our poor limited powers of comprehension. He is Perfection. And which of us human beings can grasp the significance of that? He is Eternal: i.e. though He has existed

always, yet He never had a beginning. He is all-pervading, even as the ether, which extends through an infinity of space. Who can understand these things? For surely the very essence of true religion is that it must be of a nature far beyond our merely intellectual comprehension, something to which we must look up and which we revere as infinitely above and beyond humanity. Of this we may be very sure—a religion that we could *understand* would be a mere human invention, emphatically not a divine revelation.

Again, if we acknowledge a GOD of Infinite Goodness, Infinite Wisdom, above all, Infinite Love, is it not to be expected that He would desire to reveal Himself to mankind? When He saw His children pursuing the road that leads to destruction, would He not yearn to set them an example that they might strive to follow, to give them another chance, as we say, by offering, out of the measureless depths of His Love, to pay the price of sin Himself? Is there anything so unreasonable about that? Is it not just what we should expect of Perfect Love?

However, I do not wish to go into the subject of the Atonement. Many scholars hold that even had man retained his primeval innocence, had he never sinned, there would still have been an Incarnation : for Perfect Love must desire to reveal Itself to those for whom It yearns. Be that as it may, however, the fact remains that man misused the GOD-given gift of free will ; also, the wages of sin is death—the real death, the eternal death of the soul ; for GOD and sin are diametrically opposed, and it is impossible for sin to enter the all-holy Presence. And so GOD came to earth to do the work of atonement—to make mankind again *at one* with Himself.

Now the Self-revelation of GOD to man was necessarily a gradual process. In Old Testament times, when the Israelites were emerging from the condition of virtual savagery consequent upon a century of brutal slavery in Egypt, He reveals Himself as the GOD of Power, the firm, though kind and patient, Disciplinarian, the stern Punisher of idolatry. Only the later Prophets begin to preach the GOD of perfect

Love. But the people would not listen. GOD had chosen them from among the nations of the earth to be His People, in order, of course, that having come to know Him, they might pass on that knowledge to others ; in a word, that they might become His missionaries, and ultimately convert the world. But they fondly imagined that they were GOD's favourites, and that therefore they were free to sin as they pleased ; they had merely to say, " We have Abraham to our father," and all would be well.

The voices of the Prophets, then, were but as voices in the wilderness. Moreover, it was easy enough to proclaim that GOD was Perfect Goodness, Perfect Wisdom, and so forth ; but the very limited human intellect can no more grasp the meaning of perfection than it can grasp that of infinity or eternity. But, did GOD assume human form for a space ; did the Word become Flesh and dwell among us, then in that Incarnate Form of the Deity men would see with their own eyes the meaning of Perfect Goodness, Perfect Wisdom, Perfect Purity, Perfect Self-denial, Perfect Love, and such

other attributes of the Godhead as it behoved them to be aware of ; they would have a living concrete example of the perfect life, which for the future they might at least strive to follow. But if we consider the question dispassionately, it is difficult to see how GOD could have revealed Himself to man in any other way than by dwelling as Man among men.

And if this be admitted ; if this stupendous and absolutely unique event in the world's history actually took place, viz. the Incarnation of GOD the SON, then surely we may look, nay, we surely *must* look for some wholly exceptional means of bringing that event to pass. If GOD, for us men and for our salvation, came to earth, if He deigned to be born into the world as a little Child, then surely the method of His birth must have been unique. Once we acknowledge the all-important fact that GOD became Man, there is nothing surprising about the Virgin Birth. Indeed, He surely could not have been born otherwise. One Who was the Very SON of GOD could scarcely have had a human father.

And so, too, with regard to the Resurrection. If JESUS CHRIST was indeed GOD Incarnate, He was bound to rise again from the grave. "Whom GOD raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it."¹ Not only did His Spirit survive, but His Body also, albeit in a glorified form, even as we too shall some day rise again with glorified bodies. For it is important to remember that He still remains Perfect Man. For, being in His Own Person both GOD and Man, He forms the connecting link between the two; because of His twofold Nature, He spans the great gulf between the Human and the Divine; He becomes "The Way"² that leads from earth to Heaven.

I have tried not only to adduce concrete, historical evidence for the Resurrection of our LORD, but also to show that it is an entirely reasonable belief. We cannot prove it any more than we can prove that Julius Cæsar invaded Britain. Both rest upon the continued tradition

¹ Acts ii. 24.

² St. John xiv. 5, 6.

of many centuries. Now I am going to make an appeal to the evidence of experience. Let us think for a moment of the Church's glorious Roll of Honour, of the unnumbered host of Saints and Martyrs, "the great cloud of witnesses,"¹ who have testified by their lives and deaths to the reality of the Risen Christ. Can that be a mere delusion which enabled so many thousands of men and women, and even little children, to face death with a smile; to endure with a fortitude, surely superhuman, all the most diabolical tortures that the ingenuity of man could devise? What did they stand to gain by it? So far as this world was concerned, inhuman suffering, bitter scorn and raillery, an agonizing death. But so surely as you or I might say, "I *know* that my friend —— would never fail me," so surely did they know that the Greatest of Friends was standing by them in the bitter hour of trial. And because they had come to know Him, they were content, aye, glad, to follow His example; to obey His behest: "If any man would come after Me, let

¹ Heb. xii. 1.

him take up his cross and follow Me.”¹ They knew that their reward would be great in Heaven. Let me remind you of but one, the noble Polycarp, that great and good Bishop of Smyrna, himself the disciple of St. John the Evangelist. Face to face with death in a hideous form, he was bidden to recant and save his life. “BlaspHEME CHRIST !” the magistrate told him, “and you shall go free.” Do you remember his truly noble answer ? “Eighty-and-six years have I served Him, and never has He done me a wrong. How can I blaspheme my King, Who died for me ?”

But then Polycarp *knew* the Risen CHRIST, as countless thousands of others have known Him, and as all may come to know Him, if only they will ; if only they will not harden their hearts by the pride of intellect. For there is but one way of coming to know Him : we must humble that pride of intellect, and become as little children, showing, not indeed a childish, but a child-like faith and trust. The mysteries of the Divine are beyond our human understanding ;

¹ Matt. xvi. 24, etc. ; cf. Matt. x. 38, etc.

in the very nature of things they must be. As I have pointed out already, the Infinite and Eternal Being of God are entirely beyond the grasp of our very limited powers of comprehension. Then is it not more than likely that there will be other mysteries in connection with the Divine Nature and Purpose equally beyond our intellectual reach?

So then, although it is but natural that we should wish to give definite reasons for our beliefs (and this I have tried to do), yet the fact remains that "spiritual things must be spiritually discerned."¹ In other words, Faith must come first and foremost. And after all, this is but in accordance with modern science, which is not primarily empiric. A scientific man begins nowadays, not by a series of experiments, but by believing that such-and-such is the case. Then he tests that belief by as many and diverse experiments as he can. If the tests hold good in every case, he accepts his belief as proven. In other words, he begins by exercising faith, and, as time goes on, experience tells him

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

that his faith was justified. So it is with the doctrine of the Resurrection, and with Christianity generally. It is primarily a matter of simple faith. We begin by accepting it on trust. Then we put it to the test in many different ways ; and we find that it never fails us. Experience tells us that we did right in believing.

I cannot too strongly emphasize this point. Christianity is not, primarily at any rate, a matter of reason, of logic, of "brains." If it were, then the "wise and prudent" in this world would have a better chance than the "babes." GOD is no Respector of persons. No, first and last and all the time, Christianity is the acceptance of, the adherence to, a Living Person, the Person of the Incarnate SON of GOD, Who was dead, but is now alive for evermore. And it is just herein that Christianity differs from every other religion under the sun. Our Blessed LORD did not appeal to men's powers of intellect ; He gave no elaborate and detailed reason for His claims, as He gathered round Him His little band of followers. He

merely said, "Follow Me." And those who did not stop to argue, to question why, to protest that they did not *understand*; those, in short, who were content to take Him at His word, soon found their faith far more than fully justified. For He never said, "This is the way," or "That is the truth." No, the scribes might teach in that way: He taught as One having authority: "I—I Myself—am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." And here we have the root-meaning of Christianity.

But if we would know its full meaning and joyous beauty, we, like the Apostles, must be content to accept Him first in faith. It is useless to try to understand it from without. We must enter in, and view it from within. We cannot learn to swim without first entering the water. So it is with Christianity. It is useless to "stand shivering on the brink," arguing, questioning, speculating about it. We must plunge boldly in. If we will but do this, we shall at once find ourselves upborne and carried gently forwards on the current of His love.

O make but trial of His love,
Experience will decide
How blessed are they, and only they,
Who in His truth confide.

Never mind the understanding—it is a poor, weak thing at the best. Never mind cold reason and logic. These are all very excellent things in their way, and they have their proper uses ; but the simple faith of a little child is worth all of them put together. Tell our dear LORD that, though there may be many things that you do not understand, yet you are content to take Him at His word. Never, as long as you live, will you regret it. Tell Him that you accept Him gratefully as your Master, your Friend, your Redeemer, your constant Guide. Tell Him that you acknowledge His claim to be Very GOD no less than Very Man. Tell Him that you believe that He died for our sins, that He rose again for our justification, and that He liveth evermore to make intercession for us at GOD's right hand. Ask Him humbly to increase your faith. Even the Apostles themselves were obliged to ask that.

THE EVIDENCE OF EXPERIENCE 101

Ask Him earnestly for the help and guidance of His Holy Spirit. Be sure you will not ask in vain. Seek such help as He has empowered His Holy Church to give. Above all, pray, always pray.

Only begin by believing in the Risen CHRIST, and you will find your faith amply justified; for experience will confirm it. You will come to know Him as a Living Person; especially will you realize His sacred Presence in the Holy Eucharist, the Service of His Own appointing, as you kneel before His Altar to receive Him into yourselves. For this is His divinely appointed means of keeping in close communion with us. As He Himself said, He is the Living Bread Which cometh down from Heaven to give life to the world. By means of this Sacramental Food we "dwell in Him, and He in us." Through Him alone, again, can we receive forgiveness of our sins, and grace (i.e. divine help) to strengthen us to trample temptation underfoot. Through Him alone do we obtain the gift of eternal life, for "No man cometh to the FATHER but by Me." ¹

¹ St. John xiv. 6.

Truly the simple child-like faith will bring its sure reward. "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."¹ But then our LORD immediately adds: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."¹

¹ St. Matt. xviii. 3, 4.

APPENDIX A

THE RESURRECTION BODY OF OUR LORD

"If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."

I CORINTHIANS XV. 44.

IN the first of these two additional chapters, I wish to say something with regard to the nature of our Blessed LORD's Body after He rose from the dead; for a study of the Gospel records anent His appearances subsequent to His Resurrection presents certain problems of deepest interest.

First, then, that Body would appear to have been one with the Body that He wore before the Resurrection. For it was recognized by His friends and followers. They knew Him, despite a certain apparent change, to be the same Master Who had died upon the Cross. It was still a human Body, for He was still capable of eating with them. It was undoubtedly the same Body that had been

fastened to the Cross, for it bore the marks of the nails and the spear. "Reach hither thy finger," He said to the doubting Thomas, "and see My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My side."¹

Yet, on the other hand, that Body had changed. Mary Magdalene did not recognize Him till He addressed her by name. The two disciples of Emmaus did not know Him until the moment when He broke the bread. Again, it was a Body that could appear and disappear at will, a Body that could pass through closed doors. The same Body, yet somehow changed. The same, in the sense that He could still be recognized as the same Master that His followers had known of old. Yet changed, in that it had become transformed, transfigured, glorified. The individual particles of which it had been composed had been spiritualized, etherialized, so that, at the moment of Resurrection, it was enabled to pass through the winding-sheets that enfolded it without disarranging them. The natural body of this life

¹ St. John^{xx.} 27.

had become the spiritual body of the Resurrection.

Now contrast the Resurrection of our LORD with the rising of Lazarus of Bethany from the dead. The latter was a case of resuscitation, rather than of resurrection. He appeared at the doorway of the Tomb still "bound hand and foot with the grave-clothes." Our LORD had to bid the onlookers to "loose him and let him go." In his case, there was evidently no change whatever in the nature of his human body. Unlike our LORD after His Resurrection, the corruptible had not put on incorruption, nor the mortal immortality. In the case of Lazarus, the spirit had merely returned to the body, but the latter was in no way transfigured.

Another point of interest is this : there is no record of our LORD's Risen Body having been seen by unbelievers. This fact is worth considering at some length ; for the enemies of our holy Faith sometimes seize upon it, asserting that it is virtual proof of the falsity of the Resurrection story. Why, they ask, did He never show Himself to unbelievers, e.g. to the

Pharisees and Sadducees, to Annas and Caia-phas? Had He done that, they say, they would find it more easy to credit the Gospel story.

Our answer to this question is twofold. In the first place, it was evidently contrary to the Divine plan that our LORD should any more come into contact with the world at large; for to do this would have been to renew the Sacred Passion.¹ In a sense, of course, our LORD's Passion is still going on; you and I are still crucifying Him by our sins. But so far as His work of Atonement *as Mortal Man* was concerned, His Passion came to end with that sublime cry of triumph from the Cross—Τετέλεσται, "It is finished." He had paid the price of sin in full. He had drunk the cup of suffering to the dregs. To have come into contact with, e.g. the unbelieving and vindictive Chief Priests and Scribes and Elders, would have been to renew His Passion. Nor would they have believed in Him if He had shown Himself to them. Either they would,

¹ Cf. Milligan, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 ff. See also Note at the end of this chapter.

like certain unbelieving heretics since, have asserted that He had merely recovered from a swoon or trance ; or (as even the disciples at first imagined) they would merely have supposed it was His Spirit. They would not have been persuaded, though one rose from the dead.¹ We feel instinctively that the world at large would have rejected Him after the Resurrection, even as it had rejected Him before.

And this brings me to the second point. Even if the Gospels had recorded that our LORD appeared to His unbelieving adversaries, and been recognized by them, this would have been no corroboration of the story of the Resurrection. On the contrary : the implication would have been that, just as with Lazarus, it was a case of resuscitation rather than of true resurrection. Had He been seen and recognized by the hostile Pharisees and Sadducees, for example, this would merely have suggested that He still possessed the ordinary, natural, mortal body of this life. Such evidence would positively damage the

¹ St. Luke xvi. 31.

Christian doctrine of the spiritualized Body of the Resurrection.

For "spiritual things must be spiritually discerned." I have not time to dwell upon this point at any length, as I should like to do. Let me commend to your careful study a most illuminating and suggestive chapter in Dr. Illingworth's Bampton Lectures ("Personality, Human and Divine," Chapter V: "Moral Affinity Needful for the Knowledge of a Person"). The person who has not "eyes to see" merely beholds what is in front of him. With such an one, the exquisite flower "a primrose was to him, and nothing more." The poet of the Lake School, on the other hand, is able to say:

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

The disciples of our Blessed LORD had, at least, believed on Him. Hope had been quenched, it is true, by the tragic events of Good Friday. But at least the necessary faith had been there; they had loved Him wholeheartedly; there had been a very real bond of sympathy between them and Him. In their

case, it was easy to revive, to confirm and strengthen, that faith. And therefore it was that our LORD showed Himself to them, by many infallible proofs, to be alive again. But the unspiritual Chief Priests and Scribes never had believed in Him ; they possessed not the smallest spark of faith to be rekindled ; they had always been entirely out of sympathy with Him ; they had shown nothing but vindictive hatred towards Him ; they had wilfully misunderstood His motives ; they had deliberately blinded their eyes to His miraculous works of love and mercy ; they had even accused Him of being in league with the Powers of Darkness. Of what use would it have been to appear to them ? Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned, and it was just in the power of spiritual discernment that they were—wilfully and deliberately—lacking.

Two last thoughts in conclusion. The Risen LORD was always present, though He was not always seen, during the Great Forty Days between the Resurrection and the Ascension. Sometimes His Body was visible, sometimes it

was not ; and it was visible in various forms. For the manner of the glorified body of the Resurrection is quite different from the manner of the mortal body of this life. Study the various accounts of our LORD'S appearances after death : they give us some clue as to the nature of the Resurrection Body, a wealth of possibility for the imagination of faith. We get a glimmering of what He meant when He said, " Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them " ; or again, " Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." We begin to realize what really happens on a Sunday afternoon, when two intimate friends are having a heart-to-heart talk ; we begin to understand what the Apostle meant when He termed the Church the Body of CHRIST, and individual adherents His members ; we begin to wonder, when our hearts are burning within us, whether He has not been making Himself known to us, too, in the Breaking of the Bread. We would not have a mere resuscitation, when we have got an actual Resurrection.

THE RESURRECTION BODY III

And, lastly, let us not forget the fact that our LORD still wears His human Body, albeit the glorified human Body of the Resurrection. He still is Perfect Man. Though He has returned to the right hand of the Majesty on High, whence He came, He still retains His human nature. For He did not leave His Manhood behind Him when He left this earth. Ever since the Incarnation He has been—and still remains—Very Man, as well as Very GOD. He is still one with us. All we who have been baptized into Him are members of His Body, living parts of Himself. He is the Head, the Holy Catholic Church is His Body. And because He remains Very Man, He is able to sympathize with us as none other can do. We are—let me repeat it—members of His Body ; and therefore all the strife and conflict, all the trials and vexations, that are going on in the human heart, all are going on in the Sacred Heart of JESUS CHRIST. He feels as tenderly for all our sorrows and disappointments as ever a mother does for those of her little child ; and if only we will stand by Him, He will never

fail to stand by us. "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need."¹

NOTE

"Our Lord never mentions His persecutors, He never touches on the past. . . . Not a word is said of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, not a syllable is breathed of the treason of Judas or of the persistent malice of the scribes. There is an ineffable grandeur—so unconscious that we may fail to mark it—in the utter oblivion that is passed on the foes who had beset the path of the Son of Man. . . . The past is lost to sight, and our Lord displays but one thought and one interest, and that is for the disciples and their work. He has now done with the rest of the world and He belongs wholly to them. . . ." (Latham: *Pastor Pastorum*, pp. 449 f.).

¹ Hebrews iv. 15, 16.

APPENDIX B

THE RESURRECTION BODY—OUR OWN HEREAFTER

*"But some will say, How are the dead raised? And with
what manner of body do they come?"*

I CORINTHIANS XV. 35.

HAVING considered the nature of our LORD's Resurrection Body, we will now proceed to discuss the corresponding change hereafter in our own bodies. St. Paul deals with this subject in his own inimitable manner in that great chapter of Hope which forms part of our Burial Service.

Our LORD had used precisely the same imagery. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit." That is the point. The seed must die before it can give birth to a new living plant. It must die, the particles of which it is composed must be decomposed; but there is in it something that

continues to exist. So it is with the human body: it must die, its particles must be decomposed; but that immortal *something* can never die.

"That which thou thyself sowest," writes the great Apostle, "is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."¹

Such is the doctrine of the Catholic Church, as formulated by St. Paul. This is what we mean when we repeat the words, "I believe . . . in the Resurrection of the Body." I wish to dwell upon it because there are two popular misconceptions of that doctrine widely prevalent: (1) That it is merely the spirit of man

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 36 ff.

that is raised at the Last Day. It is the spirit that survives so-called death, that awaits in Hades the general Day of Resurrection at the end of the world. But at the Second Coming the spirit is to be re clothed with the body. A spiritual body is more than a spirit. It was our LORD's Body that rose from the dead and miraculously disappeared from the Sepulchre. "Handle Me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having."¹ Because He was Who and What He was, it was not possible that He should be holden of Death, and the change from the natural body to the spiritual was accomplished without delay. He tarried but to preach the Good Tidings in Hades, and within thirty-six hours of death the mortal had put on immortality. In the case of us poor sinful men and women, such a change may not come about for thousands of years. Nevertheless, as the Athanasian Creed puts it, "At His coming, all men shall rise again *with their bodies*."

But (2) there is another prevalent error,

¹ St. Luke xxiv. 39.

namely, that the future body of the resurrection is to be composed of the very same particles as those comprising the mortal body at the moment of death. This notion is as misleading in the one direction as the former is in the other. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain." It will not be the same body, and yet it will be the same body. This is one of the mysteries of the Christian Faith, and one that we must not expect to understand fully in this life. But an illustration may serve to render it more intelligible. We stand on the beach at the seaside and watch a great wave rolling in towards the shore. Every moment that wave is leaving behind gallons of the water of which it is composed, and taking up gallons more in their place. A few seconds, perhaps, and there no longer remains in it a single drop of the water that composed it when we first caught sight of it. And yet, as it continues rolling shorewards, it is still the same wave, though its individual particles have all changed. So with our own bodies. Doctors tell us that the particles com-

prising the human body are completely changed every few years : the old ones wear out and are replaced by new ones. In other words, a man of fifty has an entirely different body from the one that he had when he was only forty : not one particle, be it muscle or blood, or nerves, or hair, or nail, or bone, is the same. And yet no one is going to dispute the fact that it still is the same body !

So, too, will it be at the General Resurrection. Our spirits will be reclothed with our very own bodies ; and yet in themselves they will be entirely new bodies : the particles of which they were composed at death will be replaced by new and glorified particles.

If only this great truth were more widely realized, surely people would not insist on imperishable coffins, or build family vaults apparently designed to last until the Day of Judgment. " Earth to earth " ! The words become rather meaningless, do they not, almost a mockery indeed, when the body is hermetically sealed in a leaden shell, which in turn is enclosed in a stout oaken coffin ? " Earth to earth " ! Would

it not be better if this were our actual practice? Why not the simple "perishable coffin," made of light canvas or wicker, which quickly rots away, leaving the mortal remains in the embrace of Mother Earth? This, or else Cremation. Why is there still so much prejudice against this clean, wholesome, sanitary practice? One can scarcely think that St. Paul's doctrine is rightly understood by those who oppose it. The Church of Rome has actually forbidden its members to be cremated. I was discussing the point not long ago with one of them, who actually informed me that the reason of this prohibition was that, if the body was burned to ashes, there could be no hope of a resurrection at the end of the world! If that is really the teaching of the Roman Church on the subject—I can scarcely believe that it is so—I can only say that it is entirely un-Catholic, and wholly opposed to the doctrine of St. Paul. For think what it implies. It would mean that there would be no resurrection for the many fearless missionaries who have been burned alive or eaten by cannibals; no resurrection

for those unflinching heroes of "the good ship *Birkenhead*," who allowed themselves to be devoured by sharks, in order that the women and children might get safely away in the boats ; no resurrection for our heroic men who were blown to pieces by the German guns. No, I cannot believe that this is really the teaching of the Roman Church. You and I, at least, cannot accept any such materialistic view of the doctrine of the Final Resurrection. For, although we shall rise again with our bodies, yet these will be glorified, spiritualized bodies ; and it matters not the least bit in the world what becomes in the meantime of the particles of which they happen to be composed at the moment of death : though love and piety will always demand that they be reverently interred, and accorded the last solemn rites of the Church, wherever possible.

Whence did St. Paul obtain his description of the future body of the Resurrection ? How comes he to speak with such unhesitating assurance as to its nature and appearance ? We have the answer to that question in his

own words: "Have I not seen JESUS our LORD?"¹ Yes, for one moment his eyes beheld the wondrous vision of the glorified Body of that JESUS Whom he had persecuted; just for one brief moment, ere its unearthly, dazzling radiance blinded his sight. But its memory never faded. Throughout his life of unrelenting hardship and persecution he was ever cheered and sustained by that glorious vision of the Risen and Ascended CHRIST. What mattered hardship and persecution? What mattered the suffering of the mortal body? He had realized that some day it was to be made like unto His glorious Body; "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."² He had borne the image of the earthy: in GOD'S own good time, he should also bear the image of the heavenly.³

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 1.² Romans viii. 17.³ 1 Cor. xv. 49.

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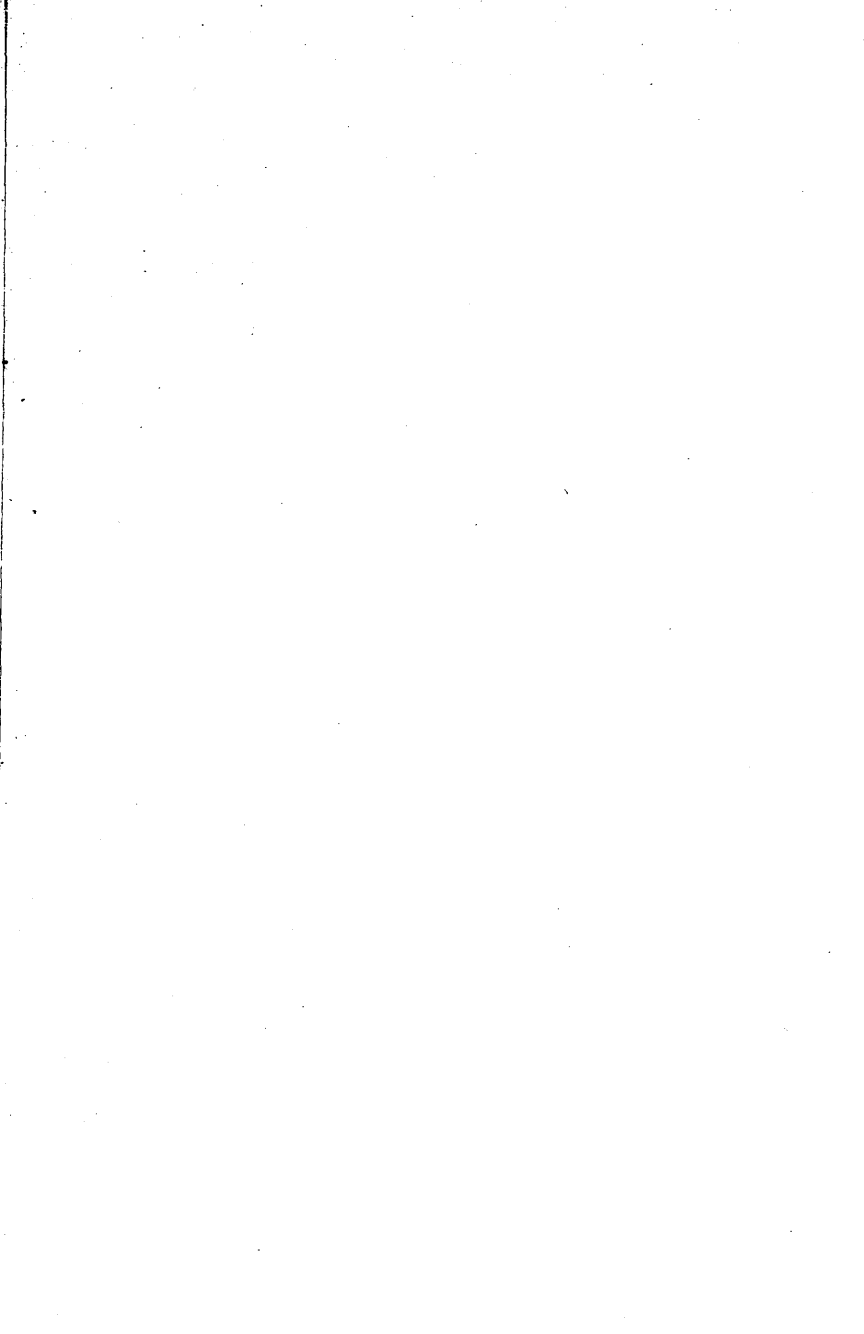
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